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A
COMMENTARY
ON
ST. PAUL'S
EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.





COMMENTARY

L8
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ON

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

V.2

WHEREIN IS MOST EXCELLENTLY SET FORTH
THE GLORIOUS RICHES OF GOD'S GRACE,
AND POWER OF THE GOSPEL;

WITH THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL,

AND

STRENGTH OF FAITH DECLARED, TO THE JOYFUL
COMFORT AND CONFIRMATION OF ALL TRUE
CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS.

ESPECIALLY SUCH AS BEING INWARDLY AFFLICTED AND
GRIEVED IN CONSCIENCE,

Do hunger and thirst for

JUSTIFICATION IN CHRIST JESUS;

FOR WHOSE CAUSE THIS BOOK IS MOST CHIEFLY TRANSLATED
AND PRINTED, AND DEDICATED TO THE SAME.

To which are now added,

THE AUTHOR'S LIFE AND PORTRAIT.

VOLUME II.

WRITTEN BY THE

Famous Champion for the Faith of Christ,

DR. MARTIN LUTHER.

*He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth
not shall be damned, Mark xvi. 16.*

Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you, John xii. 35.

Leaves:

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A

COMMENTARY

ON

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS.

Of the double Use of the Law.

HERE you must understand that there is a double use of the Law. One is civil: for God hath ordained civil laws, yea all laws to punish transgressions. Every law then is given to restrain sin. If it restrain sin, then it maketh men righteous. No, nothing less. For in that I do not kill, I do not commit adultery, I do not steal, or in that I abstain from other sins, I do it not willingly or for the love of virtue, but I fear the prison, the sword, and the hangman. These do bridle and restrain me that I sin not, as bonds and chains do restrain a lion or a bear, that he tear and devour not every thing that he meeteth: therefore the restraining from sin is not righteousness, but rather a signification of unrighteousness. For, as a mad or a wild beast is bound, lest he should destroy every thing that he meeteth; even so the law doth bridle a mad and a furious man, that he sin not after his own lust. This restraint sheweth plainly enough, that they which have need of the law (as all they have which are without Christ) are not righteous, but rather wicked and mad men, whom it is necessary, by the bonds and prison of the law, so to bridle, that they sin not. Therefore the law justifieth not.

The first use then of the law is to bridle the wicked. For the devil reigneth throughout the whole church, and enforceth men to all kinds of horrible wickedness. Therefore God hath ordained magistrates, parents, ministers, laws, bonds, and all civil ordinances, that, if they can

do no more, yet, at the least, they may bind the devil's hands, that he rage not in his bondslaves after his own lust. Like as therefore they that are possessed, in whom the devil mightily reigneth, are kept in bonds and chains, lest they should hurt other; even so in the world, which is possessed of the devil, and carried headlong into all kinds of wickedness, the magistrate is present with his bonds and chains; that is to say, with his laws, binding his hands and feet, that he run not headlong into all mischief. And, if he suffer not himself to be bridled after this sort, then he loseth his head. This civil restraint is very necessary, and appointed of God, as well for public peace, as also for the preservation of all things, but specially lest the course of the gospel should be hindered by the tumult and seditions of wicked, outrageous, and proud men. But Paul intreateth not here of this civil use and office of the law. It is indeed very necessary, but it justifieth not. For, as a possessed or a mad man is not therefore free from the snares of the devil, or well in his mind, because he hath his hands and his feet bound, and can do no hurt; even so, the world, although it be bridled by the law from outward wickedness and mischief, yet it is not therefore righteous, but still continueth wicked: yea, this restraint sheweth plainly that the world is wicked and outrageous, stirred up and enforced to all wickedness by this prince the devil; for, otherwise, it need not be bridled by laws that it should not sin.

Another use of the law is divine and spiritual, which is (as Paul saith) to increase transgressions; that is to say, to reveal unto a man his sin, his blindness, his misery, his impiety, ignorance, hatred, and contempt of God, death, hell, the judgment and deserved wrath of God. Of this use the apostle intreateth notably in the 7th to the Romans. This is altogether unknown to hypocrites, to the Popish sophisters, and school divines, and to all that walk in the opinion of the righteousness of the law, or of their own righteousness. But to the end that God might bridle and beat down this monster and this mad beast (I mean the presumption of man's righteousness and religion), which naturally maketh men proud, and puffeth them up in such sort, that they think themselves thereby to please God highly; it behoveth him to send some Hercules, which might set upon this monster, with all force and courage, to overthrow him; and utterly to destroy him; that is to

say, he was constrained to give a law in Mount Sinai, with so great majesty and with so terrible a shew, that the whole multitude was astonished. (Exod. xix. 20.)

This, as it is the proper and the principal use of the law, so is it very profitable and also most necessary. For if any be not a murderer, an adulterer, a thief, and outwardly refrain from sin, as the Pharisee did, which is mentioned in the gospel, he would swear (because he is possessed with the devil), that he is righteous, and therefore he conceiveth an opinion of righteousness, and presumeth of his good works and merits. Such a one God cannot otherwise mollify and humble, that he may acknowledge his misery and damnation, but by the law. For that is the hammer of death, the thundering of hell, and the lightning of God's wrath, that beateth to powder the obstinate and senseless hypocrites. Wherefore this is the proper and true use of the law, by lightning, by tempest, and by the sound of the trumpet (as in Mount Sinai), to terrify, and by thundering to beat down and rent in pieces that beast which is called the opinion of righteousness. Therefore, saith God by Jeremy the prophet, My word is a hammer, breaking rocks (Jer. xxv. 29.). For as long as the opinion of righteousness abideth in man, so long there abideth also in him incomprehensible pride, presumption, security, hatred of God, contempt of his grace and mercy, ignorance of the promises and of Christ. The preaching of free remission of sins, through Christ, cannot enter into the heart of such a one, neither can he feel any taste or savour thereof. For that mighty rock and adamant wall, to wit, the opinion of righteousness, wherewith the heart is environed, doth resist it.

As therefore the opinion of righteousness is a great and an horrible monster, a rebellious, obstinate, and stiff-necked beast; so, for the destroying and overthrowing thereof, God hath need of a mighty hammer, that is to say, the law: which then is in his proper use and office, when it accuseth and revealeth sin after this sort; Behold, thou hast transgressed all the commandments of God, &c. and so it striketh a terror into the conscience, so that it feeleth God to be offended and angry indeed, and itself to be guilty of eternal death. Here the poor afflicted sinner feeleth the intolerable burden of the law, and is beaten down even to desperation, so that now, being oppressed with great anguish and terror, he desireth death,

or else seeketh to destroy himself. Wherefore the law is that hammer, that fire, that mighty strong wind, and that terrible earthquake rent the mountains, and breaking the rocks (1 Kings xix. 11, 22, 23.), that is to say, the proud and obstinate hypocrites. Elijah, not being able to abide these terrors of the law, which by these things are signified, covered his face with his mantle. Notwithstanding, when the tempest ceased, of which he was a beholder, there came a soft and a gracious wind, in the which the Lord was. But it behoved that the tempest of fire, of wind, and the earthquake should pass, before the Lord should reveal himself in that gracious wind.

This terrible shew and majesty, wherein God gave his law in Mount Sinai, did represent the use of the law. There was in the people of Israel, which came out of Egypt, a singular holiness. They gloried and said: We are the people of God. We will do all those things which the Lord our God hath commanded (Exod. xix. 8.). Moreover, Moses did sanctify the people, and bad them wash their garments, refrain from their wives, and prepare themselves against the third day. There was not one of them but he was full of holiness. The third day Moses bringeth the people out of their tents to the mountain, into the sight of the Lord, that they might hear his voice. What followed then? When the children of Israel did behold the horrible sight of the mount smoking and burning, the black clouds and the lightnings flashing up and down in this horrible darkness, and heard the sound of the trumpet blowing long and waxing louder and louder; and moreover, when they heard the thunderings and lightnings, they were afraid, and standing afar off, they said unto Moses: We will do all things willingly, so that the Lord speak not unto us, lest that we die, and this great fire consume us. Teach thou us, and we will hearken unto thee (Exod. xx. 19. Deut. v. 24. xviii. 16.) I pray you, what did their purifying, their holiness, their white garments, and refraining from their wives profit them? Nothing at all. There was not one of them that could abide this presence of the Lord in his majesty and glory: but all being amazed and shaken with terror, fled back as if they had been driven by the devil. For God is a consuming fire, in whose sight no flesh is able to stand. (Deut. iv. 24.)

The law of God therefore hath properly and peculiarly

that office which it had then in Mount Sinai, when it was first given, and was first heard of them that were washed, righteous, purified and chaste: and yet notwithstanding it brought that holy people into such a knowledge of their own misery, that they were thrown down even to death and desperation. No purity nor holiness could then help them: but there was in them such a feeling of their own uncleanness, unworthiness, and sin, and of the judgment and wrath of God, that they fled from the sight of the Lord, and could not abide to hear his voice. What flesh was there ever, say they, that heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, and yet lived? This day have we seen that God talketh with man, and yet he liveth (Deut. v. 26.). They speak now far otherwise than they did a little before, when they said: We are the holy people of God, whom the Lord hath chosen for his own peculiar people before all the nations upon the earth. We will do all things which the Lord hath spoken. So it happeneth at length to all justiciaries, who being drunken with the opinion of their own righteousness, do think, when they are out of temptation, that they are beloved of God, and that God regardeth their vows, their fastings, their prayers, and their will-works, and that for the same he must give unto them a singular crown in heaven. But when that thundering, lightning, fire, that hammer which breaketh in pieces the rocks, that is to say, the law of God, cometh suddenly upon them, revealing unto them their sin, the wrath and judgment of God: then the self-same thing happeneth unto them which happened to the Jews standing at the foot of Mount Sinai.

Here I admonish all such as fear God, and specially such as shall become teachers of others hereafter, that they diligently learn out of Paul to understand the true and proper use of the law: which, I fear, after our time will be trodden under foot, and utterly abolished by the enemies of the truth. For even now, while we are yet living, and employ all our diligence to set forth the office and use both of the law and the gospel, there be very few, yea even among those which will be counted Christians, and make a profession of the gospel with us, that understand these things rightly and as they should do. What think ye then shall come to pass when we are dead and gone? I speak nothing of the Anabaptists, of the new Arians,

and such other vain spirits, who are no less ignorant of these matters than are the Papists, although they talk never so much to the contrary. For they are revolted from the pure doctrine of the gospel, to laws and traditions, and therefore they teach not Christ. They brag and they swear that they seek nothing else but the glory of Christ and the salvation of their brethren, and that they teach the word of God purely: but in very deed they corrupt it and wrest it to another sense, so that they make it to sound according to their own imagination. Therefore, under the name of Christ, they teach nothing else but their own dreams, and under the name of the gospel, ceremonies and laws. They are like therefore unto themselves, and so they still continue: that is to say, monks, workers of the law, and teachers of ceremonies, saving that they devise new names and new works.

It is no small matter then to understand rightly what the law is, and what is the true use and office thereof. And forasmuch as we teach these things both diligently and faithfully, we do thereby plainly testify that we reject not the law and works, as our adversaries do falsely accuse us: but we do altogether stablish the law, and require the works thereof, and we say that the law is good and profitable, but in his own proper use: which is, first to bridle civil transgressions, and then to reveal and to increase spiritual transgressions. Wherefore the law is also a light, which sheweth and revealeth, not the grace of God, not righteousness and life; but sin, death, the wrath and judgment of God. For, as in the Mount Sinai the thundering, lightning, the thick and dark cloud, the hill smoking and flaming, and all that terrible shew, did not rejoice nor quicken the children of Israel, but terrified and astonished them, and shewed how unable they were, with all their purity and holiness, to abide the majesty of God speaking to them out of the cloud: even so the law, when it is in his true use, doth nothing else but reveal sin, ingender wrath, accuse and terrify men, so that it bringeth them to the very brink of desperation. This is the proper use of the law, and here it hath an end, and it ought to go no further.

Contrariwise, the gospel is a light which lighteneth, quickeneth, comforteth, and raiseth up fearful consciences. For it sheweth that God, for Christ's sake, is merciful unto sinners, yea and to such as are most unworthy, if they believe that by his death they are delivered from the

curse, that is to say, from sin and everlasting death, and that through his victory, the blessing is freely given unto them; that is to say, grace, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and everlasting life. Thus, putting a difference between the law and the gospel, we give to them both their own proper use and office. Of this difference between the law and the gospel, there is nothing to be found in the books of the monks, canonists, schoolmen; no, nor in the books of the ancient fathers. Augustine did somewhat understand this difference, and shewed it. Jerom and others knew it not. Briefly, there was wonderful silence many years as touching this difference in all schools and churches: and this brought men's consciences into great danger. For, unless the gospel be plainly discerned from the law, the true Christian doctrine cannot be kept sound and uncorrupt. Contrariwise, if this difference be well known, then is also the true manner of justification known, and then it is an easy matter to discern faith from works, Christ from Moses, and all politic works. For all things without Christ are the ministers of death for the punishing of the wicked. Therefore Paul answereth to this question after this manner:

Verse 19. *The law was added, because of transgressions.*

That is to say, that transgressions might increase, and be ~~no~~ more known and seen. And indeed so it cometh to pass. For when sin, death, the wrath and judgment of God, and hell, are revealed to a man through the law, it is impossible but that he should become impatient, murmur against God, and despise his will. For he cannot bear the judgment of God, his own death and damnation; and yet notwithstanding he cannot escape them. Here he must needs fall into the hatred of God, and blasphemy against God. Before, when he was out of temptation, he was a very holy man; he worshipped and praised God; he bowed his knee before God, and gave him thanks as the Pharisee did (Luke xviii.). But now, when sin and death is revealed unto him, he wisheth that there were no God. The law therefore, of itself, bringeth a special hatred of God. And thus sin is not only revealed and known by the law, but also is increased and stirred up by the law. Therefore, Paul saith, Sin, that it might appear to be sin, wrought death in me

by that which was good, that sin might be out of measure sinful by the commandment (Rom. vii.). There he entreateth of this effect of the law very largely.

Paul answereth therefore to this question, If the law do not justify, to what end then serveth it? Although (saith he) it justify not, yet is it very profitable and necessary. For first it civilly restraineth such as are carnal, rebellious, and obstinate. Moreover, it is a glass that sheweth unto a man himself, that he is a sinner, guilty of death, and worthy of God's everlasting wrath and indignation. To what end serveth this humbling, this bruising and beating down by this hammer, the law I mean? To this end, that we may have an entrance into grace. So then the law is a minister that prepareth the way unto grace. For God is the God of the humble, the miserable, the afflicted, the oppressed, and the desperate, and of those that are brought even to nothing; and his nature is to exalt the humble, to feed the hungry, to give sight to the blind, to comfort the miserable, the afflicted, the bruised and broken-hearted, to justify sinners, to quicken the dead, and to save the very desperate and damned. For he is an Almighty Creator, making all things of nothing. Now that pernicious and pestilent opinion of man's own righteousness, which will not be a sinner, unclean, miserable, and damnable; but righteous and holy; suffereth not God to come to his own natural and proper work. Therefore God must needs take this maul in hand (the law I mean), to drive down, to beat in pieces, and to bring to nothing this beast, with her vain confidence, wisdom, righteousness, and power, that she may so learn at the length by her own misery and mischief, that she is utterly forlorn, lost and damned. Here now, when the conscience is thus terrified with the law, then cometh the doctrine of the gospel and grace, which raiseth up and comforteth the same again, saying, Christ came into the world, not to break the bruised reed, nor to quench the smoking flax; but to preach the gospel of glad tidings to the poor, to heal the broken and contrite in heart, to preach forgiveness of sins to the captives, &c. (Isai. xliii. 3. Matt. xii. 20.)

. But here lieth all the difficulty of this matter, that when a man is terrified and cast down, he may be able to raise up himself again, and say, Now I am bruised and afflicted enough. The time of the law hath tormented and vexed

me sharply enough. Now is the time of grace; now is the time to hear Christ, out of whose mouth proceed the words of grace and life. Now is the time to see, not the smoking and burning Mount Sina, but the Mount Moria; where is the throne, the temple, the mercy-seat of God, that is to say Christ, who is the king of righteousness and peace. There will I hearken what the Lord speaketh unto me, who speaketh nothing else but peace unto his people.

Nay, the foolishness of man's heart is so great, that, in this conflict of conscience, when the law hath done his office, and exercised his true ministry, he doth not only lay hold upon the doctrine of grace, which promiseth most assuredly the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake, but seeketh and procureth to himself more laws to satisfy and quiet his conscience. If I live, saith he, I will amend my life. I will do this; I will do that. Here, except thou do the quite contrary; that is to say, except thou send Moses away with his law, to those that are secure, proud, and obstinate, and in these terrors and in this anguish lay hold upon Christ, who was crucified and died for thy sins, look for no salvation.

So the law with his office helpeth by occasion to justification, in that it driveth a man to the promise of grace, and maketh the same sweet and comfortable unto him. Wherefore we do not abrogate the law, but we shew the true office and use of the law; to wit, that it is a true and profitable minister, which driveth a man to Christ. Therefore, after that the law hath humbled thee, terrified thee, and utterly beaten thee down, so that now thou art at the very brink of desperation, see that thou learn how to use the law rightly. For the office and use of it is not only to reveal sin and the wrath of God, but also to drive men unto Christ. This use of the law the Holy Ghost only setteth forth in the gospel, where he witnesseth that God is present unto the afflicted and broken-hearted. Wherefore, if thou be bruised with this hammer, use not this bruising perversely, so that thou load thyself with more laws, but hear Christ saying, Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you (Matt. xi. 28.). When the law so oppresseth thee, that all things seem to be utterly desperate, and thereby driveth thee unto Christ to seek help and succour at his hands, then is the law in his true use; and, through the gospel,

it helpeth to justification. And this is the best and most perfect use of the law.

Wherefore Paul here beginneth afresh to intreat of the law, and defineth what it is, taking occasion of that which he said before: to wit, that the law justifieth not. For reason, hearing this, by-and-by doth thus infer: Then God gave the law in vain. It was necessary, therefore, to seek how to define the law truly, and to shew what the law is, and how it ought to be understood, that it be not taken more largely or more straitly than it should be. There is no law (saith he) that is of itself necessary to justification. Therefore, when we reason as touching righteousness, life, and everlasting salvation, the law must be utterly removed out of our sight, as if it had never been, or never should be, but as though it were nothing at all. For, in the matter of justification, no man can remove the law far enough out of his sight, or behold the only promise of God sufficiently and as he should do. Therefore I said before, that the law and the promise must be separate far asunder as touching the inward affections and the inward man, albeit indeed they are nearly joined together.

Verse xix. Until the Seed came, unto the which the promise was made.

Paul maketh not the law perpetual, but he saith that it was given and added to the promises for transgressions; that is to say, to restrain them civilly, but specially to reveal and to increase them spiritually, that not continually, but for a time. Here it is necessary to know how long the power and the tyranny of the law ought to endure, which discovereth sin, sheweth unto us what we are, and revealeth the wrath of God. They whose hearts are touched with an inward feeling of these matters, should suddenly perish, if they should not receive comfort. Therefore, if the days of the law should not be shortened, no man should be saved. A time therefore must be set, and bounds limited to the law, beyond which it may not reign. How long then ought the dominion of the law to endure? Until the seed come; to wit, that seed of which it is written, In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. The tyranny of the law then must so long continue unto the fulness of the time, and until that seed of the blessing come; not to the end that the law should bring this seed or give righteousness, but

that it should civilly restrain the rebellious and obstinate, and shut them up, as it were, in prison; and spiritually should reprove them of sin, humble them, and terrify them; and, when they are thus humbled and beaten down, it should constrain them to look up to that blessed seed.

We may understand the continuance of the law both according to the letter and also spiritually: according to the letter thus, that the law continueth until the time of grace. The law and the prophets, saith Christ, prophesied until John. From the time of John, until this day, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force (Matt. xi. 12, 13.). In this time Christ was baptized, and began to preach: at what time also, after the letter, the law, and all the ceremonies of Moses ceased.

Spiritually the law may be thus understood, that it ought not to reign in the conscience any longer than to the appointed time of this blessed seed. When the law sheweth unto me my sin, terrifieth me, and revealeth the wrath and judgment of God, so that I begin to tremble and to despair: there hath the law his bounds, his time and his end limited, so that he now ceaseth to exercise his tyranny any more. For when he hath done his office sufficiently, he hath revealed the wrath of God, and terrified enough. Here we must say, Now leave off, law; thou hast done enough; thou hast terrified and tormented me enough. All thy floods have run over me, and thy terrors have troubled me. Lord, turn not away thy face in thy wrath from thy servant: rebuke me not, I beseech thee, in thine anger, &c. (Psal. xlii. 7. lxix. 2. xxvi. 9. vi. 2.) When these terrors and troubles come, then is the time and hour of the blessed seed come. Let the law then give place, which indeed is added to reveal and to increase transgressions, and yet no longer, but, until that blessed seed be come. When that is come, then let the law leave off to reveal sin and to terrify any more: and let him deliver up his kingdom to another; that is to say, to the blessed seed, which is Christ; who hath gracious lips, wherewith he accuseth and terrifieth not, but speaketh of far better things than doth the law, namely, of grace, peace, forgiveness of sins, victory over sin, death, the devil, and damnation, gotten up by his death and passion unto all believers.

Paul therefore sheweth by these words : Until the seed shall come, unto whom the blessing was promised, how long the law should endure literally and spiritually. According to the letter, it ceased after the blessed seed came into the world, taking upon him our flesh, giving the Holy Ghost, and writing a new law in our hearts. But the spiritual time of the law doth not end at once, but continueth fast rooted in the conscience. Therefore, it is a hard matter for a man which is exercised with the spiritual use of the law, to see the end of the law. For in these terrors and feeling of sin, the mind cannot conceive this hope, that God is merciful, and that he will forgive sins for Christ's sake : but it judgeth only that God is angry with sinners, and that he accuseth and condemneth them. If faith come not here to raise up again the troubled and afflicted conscience, or else, according to that saying of Christ, Where two or three are gathered together in my name, &c. (Matt. xviii. 20.), there be some faithful brother at hand that may comfort him by the word of God, which is so oppressed and beaten down by the law, desperation and death must needs follow. Therefore it is a perilous thing for a man to be alone. Wo be to him that is alone (saith the preacher), for when he falleth he hath none to raise him up (Eccles. iv. 10.). Wherefore, they that ordained that cursed monkish and solitary life, gave occasion to many thousands to despair. If a man should separate himself from company of others for a day or two, to be occupied in prayer (as we read of Christ, that sometime he went aside alone into the mount, and by night continued in prayer), there were no danger therein (Matt. xxvi. 39. Luke xxvii. 41.). But when they constrained men continually to live a solitary life, it was a device of the devil himself. For when a man is tempted, and is alone, he is not able to raise up himself, no not in the least temptation that can be.

Verse 19. *And it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.*

This is a little digression from this purpose, which he neither declareth nor finisheth; but only toucheth it by the way, and so proceedeth. For he returneth incontinent to his purpose, when he saith, What is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Now, this was the occasion of his digression. He fell into this difference between

the law and the gospel, that the law, added to the promises, did differ from the gospel, not only in respect of the time, but also of the author and the efficient cause thereof. For the law was delivered by the angels (Heb. 1), but the gospel by the Lord himself. Wherefore the gospel is far more excellent than the law. For the law is the voice of the servants, but the gospel is the voice of the Lord himself. Therefore, to abase and to diminish the authority of the law, and to exalt and magnify the gospel, he saith, that the law was a doctrine given to continue but for a small time (for it endured but only until the fulness of the promise, that is to say, until the blessed seed came which fulfilled the promise:), but the gospel was for ever. For all the faithful have had always one and the self-same gospel from the beginning of the world, and by that they were saved. The law therefore is far inferior to the gospel, because it was ordained by the angels which are but servants, and endured but for a short time, whereas the gospel was ordained by the Lord himself, to continue for ever (Heb. 1.). For it was promised before all worlds (Tit. 1.).

Moreover, the word of the law was not only ordained by the angels being but servants, but also by another servant far inferior to the angels, namely, by a man, that is (as here he saith), by the hand of a mediator, that is to say, Moses. Now, Christ is not a servant, but the Lord himself. He is not a mediator between God and man, according to the law, as Moses was, but he is the mediator of a better testament. The law therefore was ordained by angels as servants. For Moses and the people heard God speaking in the Mount Sinai; that is to say, they heard the angels speaking in the person of God. Therefore Stephen, in the 7th chapter of the Acts, saith, Ye have received the law by the ministry of angels, and ye have not regarded it. Also, the text in the third of Exodus sheweth plainly that the angel appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire, and spake unto him from the midst of the bush.

Paul therefore signifieth that Christ is a mediator of a far better testament than Moses. And here he alludeth to that history in Moses concerning the giving of the law, which saith, that Moses led the people out of their tents to meet with God, and that he placed them at the foot of the Mount Sinai. There was an heavy and an horrible sight. The whole mount was on a flaming fire. When the people saw this they began to tremble; for they thought

that they should have been suddenly destroyed in this fearful tempest. Because therefore they could not abide the law sounding so horribly out of Mount Sinai (for that terrifying voice of the law would have killed the people), they said unto Moses, their mediator, Come thou hither, and hear what the Lord saith, and speak thou unto us. And he answered, I myself, saith he, was a mediator, and one that stood between God and you, &c. By these places it is plain enough that Moses was appointed a mediator between the people and the law speaking.

Wherefore Paul by his history goeth about to declare, that it is impossible that righteousness should come by the law. As if he should say, how can the law justify, seeing the whole people of Israel, being purified and sanctified, yea, and Moses himself the mediator between God and the people, were afraid and trembled at the voice of the law, as it is said in the epistle to the Hebrews? Here was nothing but fear and trembling. But what righteousness and holiness is this, not to be able to bear, yea not to be able or willing to hear the law, but to fly from it, and so to hate it, that it is impossible to hate and abhor any thing more in the whole world? as the history most plainly testifieth, that the people, when they heard the law, did hate nothing more than the law, and rather wished death than to hear the law.

So, when sin is discovered, as it were, by certain bright beams which the law striketh into the heart, there is nothing more odious and more intolerable to man than the law is. Here he would rather chuse death, than be constrained to bear these terrors of the law never so little a time, which is a most certain token that the law justifieth not. For if the law did justify, then, no doubt, men would love it; they would delight and take pleasure in it, and would embrace it with hearty good will. But where is this good will? No where; neither in Moses nor in the whole people, for they were all astonished, and fled back. And how doth a man love that which he flieth? Or how delighteth he in that which he deadly hateth?

Wherefore this flight sheweth a deadly hatred of man's heart against the law, and so consequently against God himself, the author of the law. And if there were no other argument to prove that righteousness cometh not by the law, this one history were enough, which Paul

setteth out in these words: In the hand of a mediator. As though he would say, Do ye not remember that your fathers were so far unable to hear the law, that they had need of Moses to be their mediator? And when he was appointed to that office, they were so far from loving of the law, that they by a fearful flight, together with their mediator, shewed themselves to hate the same, as the epistle to the Hebrews witnesseth: and if they could, they would have gone even through an iron mountain back again into Egypt. But they were enclosed round about, so that they had no way to escape. Therefore they cry unto Moses, Speak thou unto us: for if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die (Exod. xx. 19. Deut. v. 24.). Now, therefore, if they be not able to hear the law, how should they be able to accomplish it?

Wherefore, if the people that were under the law were constrained of necessity to have a mediator, it followeth, by an infallible consequence, that the law justifieth them not. What did it then? Even the same thing that Paul saith, The Law is added that sin might abound (Rom. v. 20.). The law therefore was a light and a sun which struck his beams into the hearts of the children of Israel, whereby it terrified them, and struck into them such a fear of God, that they hated both the law and the author thereof; which is an horrible impiety. Would ye now say that these men were righteous? They are righteous which hear the law, and with a good will embrace the same and delight therein. But the history of giving the law witnesseth, that all men in the whole world, be they never so holy (especially seeing they which were purified and sanctified could not hear the law), do hate and abhor the law, and wish that the law were not. Therefore it is impossible that men should be justified by the law: nay it hath a clean contrary effect.

Although Paul (as I have said) doth but only touch this place by the way, and doth not thoroughly weigh it, nor fully finish the same, yet he that shall diligently and attentively read it, may easily understand that he speaketh very well of both mediators, that is to say, of Moses and of Christ, and compareth the one with the other, as hereafter we will declare. If he would have prosecuted this matter more largely, this only place would have ministered unto him an argument and occasion plentiful enough to

write a new epistle : and that history also in the 19th and 20th of Exodus, concerning the giving of the law, would minister matter enough to write a great volume, although it were read but slightly and without affection : albeit it may seem to be very barren to those which know not the true office and use of the law, if it be compared with other holy histories.

Hereby we may see, that if all the world had stood at the mount, as the people of Israel did, they would have hated the law, and would have fled from it as they did. The whole world therefore is an enemy to the law, and hateth it most deadly. But the law is holy, righteous, and good, and is the perfect rule of the will of God. How then can he be righteous, which doth not only abhor and detest the law and fly from it, but moreover is an enemy of God, who is the author of the law? And true it is that the flesh can do no otherwise, as Paul witnesseth, Rom. viii. The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be. Therefore it is an extreme madness so to hate God and his law, that thou canst not abide to hear it, and yet notwithstanding to affirm that we are made righteous thereby.

Wherefore the sophisters and school-divines are stark blind, and understand nothing at all of this doctrine. They look only upon the outward visor of the law, thinking that it is accomplished by civil works, and that they are righteous before God, which do the same externally, not considering the true and spiritual effect thereof; which is not to justify, and to quiet and pacify afflicted consciences, but to increase sin, to terrify the conscience, and to engender wrath. They being ignorant of this, do vaunt that a man hath a good will, and a right judgment of reason to do the law of God. But whether this be true or no, ask the people of the law with their mediator, who heard the voice of the law in the mount Sinai. Ask David himself, who as often as he complaineth in the Psalms, that he was cast from the face of God, that he was even in hell, and that he was terrified and oppressed with the greatness of his sin, with the wrath and judgment of God, set not sacrifices nor yet the law itself against these mighty tyrants, but was raised up and comforted by the only free mercy of God. Therefore the law justifieth not.

If the law should serve mine affections, that is to say,

if it should approve mine hypocrisy, mine opinion and confidence of mine own righteousness: if it should say, that without the mercy of God and faith in Christ, through the help of it alone (as all the world naturally judgeth of the law), I might be justified before God: and moreover if it should say, that God is pacified and overcome by works, and is bound to reward the doers thereof, that so having no need of God, I might be a God unto myself, and merit grace by my works, and setting my saviour Christ apart, might save myself by my own merits: if, I say, the law should thus serve mine affections, then should it be sweet, delectable, and pleasant indeed; so well can reason flatter itself. Notwithstanding this should no longer continue, but until the law should come to his own use and office: then should it appear that reason cannot suffer those bright beams of the law. There some Moses must needs come between as a mediator, and yet notwithstanding without any fruit, as I will declare hereafter.

To this purpose serveth that place, in the third chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians, concerning the covered face of Moses, where Paul, out of the history of the 24th chapter of Exodus, sheweth that the children of Israel not only did not know, but also could not abide the true and spiritual use of the law; first, for that they could not look unto the end of the law (saith Paul), because of the veil which Moses put upon his face. Again, they could not look upon the face of Moses, being bare and uncovered, for the glory of his countenance. For when Moses went about to talk with them, he covered his face with a veil, without which they could not bear his talk; that is, they could not hear Moses himself, their mediator, unless he had set another mediator between, that is to say, the veil. How then should they hear the voice of God, or of an angel, when they could not hear the voice of Moses, being but a man, yea and also their mediator, except his face had been covered? Therefore, except the blessed seed come to raise up and comfort him which hath heard the law, he perisheth through desperation, in detesting of the law, in hating and blaspheming of God, and daily more and more offending against God. For this fear and confusion of conscience which the law bringeth, the deeper it pierceth, and the longer it con-

tinueth, the more it increaseth hatred and blasphemy against God.

The history therefore teacheth what is the power of free-will. The people are stricken with fear, they tremble, and they fly back. Where is now free will? Where is now that good will, that good intent, that right judgment of reason, which the papists do so much brag of? What availeth free-will here in these sanctified and holy men? It can say nothing. It blindeth their reason; it perverteth their will: it receiveth not, it saluteth not, it embraceth not, with joy, the Lord coming, with thundering, lightning, and fire, into the Mount Sinai: it cannot hear the voice of the Lord; but, contrariwise, it saith, Let not the Lord speak unto us, lest we die. We see then what the strength and power of free-will is in the children of Israel, who, though they were cleansed and sanctified, could not abide the hearing of one syllable or letter of the law. Therefore these high commendations, which the papists give to their free-will, are nothing else but mere toys and doting dreams.

Verse 20. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one.

Here he compareth these two mediators together, and that with a marvellous brevity; yet so notwithstanding that he satisfieth the attentive reader, who, because this word mediator is general, by-and-by understandeth that Paul speaketh of the mediator generally, and not of Moses only. A mediator, saith he, is not a mediator for one only. But this word necessarily comprehendeth two, that is to say, him that is offended, and him that is the offender; of whom, the one hath need of intercession, and the other needeth none. Wherefore a mediator is not of one, but of two, and of such two as be at variance between themselves. So Moses, by a general definition, is a mediator, because he doth the office of a mediator between the law and the people, which cannot abide the true and spiritual use of the law. The law therefore must have a new face, and his voice must be changed; that is to say, the voice of the law must be made spiritual, or the law must be made lively in the inward affection, and must put on a visor or a veil, that it may now become more tolerable, so that the people may be able to hear it by the voice of Moses.

Now the law being thus covered, speaketh no more in his majesty, but by the mouth of Moses. After this manner it doth not his office any more; that is, it terrifieth not the conscience. And this is the cause that they do neither understand, nor regard it: by means whereof they become secure, negligent, and presumptuous hypocrites. And yet notwithstanding the one of these two must needs be done; to wit, that either the law must be without his use, and covered with a veil (but then, as I have said, it maketh hypocrites), or else it must be in his use without the veil, and then it killeth. For man's heart cannot abide the law in his true use without the veil. It behoveth thee therefore, if thou look to the end of the law without the veil, either to lay hold on that blessed seed by faith, that is to say, thou must look beyond the end of the law, unto Christ, which is the accomplishment of the law, which may say unto thee, The law hath terrified thee enough: be of good comfort, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee (whereof I will speak more anon), or else surely thou must have Moses for thy mediator, with his veil.

For this cause Paul saith, A mediator is not a mediator for one. For it could not be that Moses should be a mediator of God alone, for God needeth no mediator. And again, he is not a mediator of the people only, but he doth the office of a mediator between God and the people, which were at variance with God. For it is the office of a mediator to pacify the party that is offended, and to reconcile unto him the party which is the offender. Notwithstanding Moses is such a mediator (as I have said) as doth nothing else but change the voice of the law, and maketh it tolerable, so that the people may abide the hearing thereof, but he giveth no power to accomplish the same. To conclude, he is a mediator of the veil, and therefore he giveth no power to perform the law, but only in the veil. Therefore his disciples, in that he is a mediator of the veil, must always be hypocrites.

But what should have come to pass, think ye, if the law had been given without Moses, either else before or after Moses, and that there had been no mediator, and moreover, that the people should neither have been suffered to fly, nor to have a mediator? Here the people being beaten down with intolerable fear, should either have perished forthwith, or if they should have escaped,

there must needs have come some other mediator, which should have set himself between the law and the people, to the end that both the people might be preserved, and the law remain in his force, and also an atonement might be made between the law and the people. Indeed Moses cometh in the mean time, and is made a mediator; he putteth on a veil, and covereth his face; but he cannot deliver men's consciences from the anguish and terror which the law bringeth. Therefore, when the poor sinner, at the hour of death or in the conflict of conscience, feeleth the wrath and judgment of God for sin, which the law revealeth and increaseth: here to keep him from desperation, setting Moses aside with his law, he must have had a mediator which may say unto him, Although thou be a sinner, yet shalt thou remain; that is, thou shalt not die, although the law, with his wrath and malediction, do still remain.

This mediator is Jesus Christ, which changeth not the voice of the law, nor hideth the same with a veil as Moses did, nor leadeth me out of the sight of the law: but he setteth himself against the wrath of the law and taketh it away, and satisfieth the law in his own body by himself. And by the gospel he saith unto me, Indeed the law threatneth unto thee the wrath of God and eternal death: but be not afraid; fly not away, but stand fast, I supply and perform all things for thee: I satisfy the law for thee. This is a mediator which far excelleth Moses, who setteth himself between God being offended, and the offender. The intercession of Moses here profiteth nothing: he hath done his office, and he with his veil is now vanished away. Here the miserable sinner being utterly desperate, or a man now approaching unto death, and God being offended, do encounter together. Therefore there must come a far other mediator than Moses, which may satisfy the law, take away the wrath thereof, and may reconcile unto God which is angry, that poor sinner, miserable and guilty of eternal death.

Of this mediator Paul speaketh briefly when he saith, A mediator is not a mediator for one. For this word mediator properly signifieth such a one as doth the office of a mediator between the party that is offended and the offender. We are the offenders. God, with his law, is he which is offended; and the offence is such, that God cannot pardon it, neither can we satisfy for the same.

Therefore, between God (who of himself is but one), and us, there is wonderful discord. Moreover, God cannot revoke his law, but he will have it observed and kept. And we, which have transgressed the law, cannot fly from the presence of God. Christ therefore hath set himself a mediator between two, which are quite contrary and separate asunder with an infinite and everlasting separation, and hath reconciled them together. And how hath he done this? He hath put away (as Paul saith in another place) the hand-writing which was against us, which by ordinances (that is, by the law) was contrary unto us, and he hath taken it and fastened it to the cross, and hath spoiled principalities and powers, and hath made a shew of them openly, and hath triumphed over them by himself. Therefore he is not a mediator of one, but of two, utterly disagreeing between themselves.

This is also a place full of power and efficacy to confound the righteousness of the law, and to teach us, that, in the matter of justification, it ought to be utterly removed out of our sight. Also this word mediator ministereth sufficient matter to prove that the law justifieth not; for else what need should we have of a mediator? Seeing then that man's nature cannot abide the hearing of the law, much less is it able to accomplish the law, or to agree with the law.

This doctrine (which I do so often repeat, and not without tediousness do still beat into your heads) is the true doctrine of the law, which every Christian ought with all diligence to learn, that he may be able truly to define what the law is, what is the true use and office, what are the limits, what is the power, the time and the end thereof. For it hath an effect clean contrary to the judgment of all men, which have this pestilent and pernicious opinion naturally rooted in them, that the law justifieth. Therefore I fear lest this doctrine will be defaced and darkened again when we are dead. For the world must be replenished with horrible darkness and errors before the latter day come.

Whoso, therefore, is able to understand this, let him understand it, that the law, in true Christian divinity, and in his true and proper definition, doth not justify, but hath a quite contrary effect. For it sheweth and revealeth unto us ourselves; it setteth God before us in his anger; it revealeth God's wrath; it terrifieth us; and it

doth not only reveal sin, but also mightily increaseth sin, so that where sin was before but little, now by the law, which bringeth the same to light, it becometh exceeding sinful; so that a man now beginneth to hate the law and to fly from it, and with a perfect hatred to abhor God the maker of the law. This is not to be justified by the law (and that reason itself is compelled to grant), but to commit a double sin against the law; first, not only to have a will so disagreeing from the law that thou canst not hear it, but also to do contrary to that which it commandeth; and secondly, so to hate it that thou wouldst wish it were abolished, together with God himself, who is the author thereof, and absolutely good.

Now what greater blasphemy, what sin more horrible can be imagined, than to hate God, to abhor his law, and not to suffer the hearing thereof, which notwithstanding is good and holy? For the history doth plainly witness, that the people of Israel refused to hear that excellent law, those holy and most gracious words, namely, I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other Gods, &c. Shewing mercy to thousands, &c. Honour thy father and thy mother, that it may go well with thee, and that thy days may be prolonged upon the earth, &c. (Exod. xx. 2. Deut. v. 5.) and that they had need of a mediator. They could not abide this most excellent, perfect, and divine wisdom; this most gracious, sweet, and comfortable doctrine. Let not the Lord speak unto us, say they, lest we die. Speak thou unto us, &c. Doubtless it is a marvellous thing that a man cannot hear that which is his whole felicity, namely, that he hath a God, yea and a merciful God, which will shew mercy unto him in many thousands of generations, &c. And moreover that he cannot abide that which is his chief safety and defence, namely, Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. For by these words the Lord hath defended and fortified the life of man, his wife, his children, and his goods, as it were, with a wall, against the force and violence of the wicked.

The law then can do nothing, saving that by his light it lighteneth the conscience, that it may know sin, death, the judgment and the wrath of God. Before the law come, I am secure. I feel no sin. But when the law

cometh, sin, death, and hell are revealed unto me. This is not to be made righteous, but guilty, and the enemy of God; to be condemned to death and hell fire. The principal point therefore of the law in true Christian divinity is to make men not better, but worse; that is to say, it sheweth unto them their sin, that, by the knowledge thereof, they may be humbled, terrified, bruised, and broken, and by this means may be driven to seek comfort, and so come to that blessed seed.

Verse 20. *But God is one.*

God offended no man, and therefore needed no mediator. But we offend God, and therefore we have need of a mediator; not Moses, but Christ, which speaketh far better things for us, &c. Hitherto he hath continued in his digression. Now he returneth to his purpose.

Verse 21. *Is the law then against the promise of God?*

Paul said before that the law justifieth not. Shall we then take away the law? No, not so. For it bringeth with it a certain commodity. What is that? It bringeth men unto the knowledge of themselves. It discovereth and increaseth sin, &c. Here now ariseth another objection: if the law do nothing else but make men worse, in shewing unto them their sin, then is it contrary to the promises of God. For it seemeth that God is but only provoked to anger, and offended through the law, and therefore he regardeth not, nor performeth his promises. We Jews have thought the contrary, to wit, that we are restrained and bridled by this external discipline, to the end that God, being provoked thereby, might hasten the performing of his promise, and that by his discipline we might deserve the promise.

Paul answereth, It is nothing so. But contrariwise, if ye have regard to the law, the promise is rather hindered. For natural reason offendeth God, which so faithfully promiseth, while it will not hear his good and holy law. For it saith, Let not the Lord speak unto us, &c. How can it be then that God should perform his promise unto those, which, not only receive not his law and his discipline, but also with a mortal hatred do shun it and fly from it: here, therefore, as I said, riseth this objection:

Is the law against the promise of God? This objection Paul toucheth by the way, and briefly answereth, saying :

Verse 21. *God forbid.*

Why so? First, for that God maketh no promise unto us because of our worthiness, our merits, our good works; but for his own goodness and mercies sake in Christ. He saith not to Abraham, All nations shall be blessed in thee because thou hast kept the law. But when he was uncircumcised, had no law, and was yet an idolater, he said unto him, Go out of thine own land, &c. I will be thy protector, &c. Also, In thy seed shall all nations be blessed (Gen. xii. 1. xv. 1, 12, 18.). These are absolute and mere promises which God freely giveth unto Abraham, without any condition or respect of works, either going before or coming after.

This maketh especially against the Jews, which think that the promises of God are hindered because of their sins. God (saith Paul) doth not slack his promises because of our sins, or hasten the same for our righteousness and merits. He regardeth neither the one nor the other. Wherefore, although we become more sinful, and are brought into greater contempt and hatred of God by means of the law, yet notwithstanding God is not moved thereby to defer his promise. For his promise doth not stand upon our worthiness, but upon his only goodness and mercy. Therefore, where the Jews say, the Messias is not yet come, because our sins do hinder his coming, it is a detestable dream. As though God should become unrighteous because of our sins, or made a liar because we are liars. He abideth always just and true: his truth therefore is the only cause that he accomplisheth and performeth his promise.

Moreover, although the law do reveal and increase sin, yet is it not against the promises of God, yea rather it confirmeth the promises. For as concerning his proper work and end, it humbleth and prepareth a man (so that he useth it rightly) to sigh and seek for mercy. For when sin is revealed to a man, and so increased by the law, then he beginneth to perceive the wickedness and hatred of man's heart against the law, and against God himself the author of the law. Then he feeleth indeed that not only

he loveth not God, but also hateth and blasphemeth God, who is full of goodness and mercy, and his law which is just and holy. Then is he constrained to confess that there is no good thing in him. And thus, when he is thrown down and humbled by the law, he acknowledgeth himself to be most miserable and damnable. When the law therefore constraineth a man so to acknowledge his own corruption, and to confess his sin from the bottom of his heart, then it hath done his office truly, and his time is accomplished and ended : and now is the time of grace, that the blessed seed may come to raise up and comfort him that is so cast down and humbled by the law.

After this manner the law is not against the promises of God. For, first, the promise hangeth not upon the law, but upon the truth and mercy of God only and alone. Secondly, when the law is in his chief end and office, it humbleth a man, and, in humbling him, it maketh him to sigh and groan, and to seek the hand and aid of the mediator, and maketh his grace and his mercy exceeding sweet and comfortable (as is said, Thy mercy is sweet, Ps. cix.), and this gift precious and inestimable. And by this means it prepareth us, and maketh us apt to apprehend and to receive Christ. For, as the poet saith,

Dulcia non meruit, qui non gustavit amara :

That is,

Whoso hath not tasted the things that are bitter,
Is not worthy to taste the things that are sweeter.

There is a common proverb, That hunger is the best cook.

Like as therefore the dry earth coveteth the rain, even so the law maketh troubled and afflicted souls to thirst after Christ. To such Christ savoureth sweetly; to them he is nothing else but joy, consolation, and life. And there beginneth Christ and his benefit rightly to be known.

This is then the principal use of the law, namely, when a man can so use it, that it may humble him, and make him to thirst after Christ. And indeed Christ requireth thirsty souls, whom he most lovingly and graciously allureth and calleth unto him when he saith, Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you (Isaiah lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18.). He delighteth therefore to

water these dry grounds. He poureth not his waters upon fat and rank ground, or such as are not dry and covet no water. His benefits are inestimable, and therefore he giveth them to none but such as have need of them, and earnestly desire them. He preached glad tidings to the poor: he giveth drink to the thirsty. If any thirst (saith St. John) let him come unto me, &c. He healeth the broken-hearted, &c. (John vii. 37. Ps. cxlvii. 3.) That is, he comforteth those that are bruised and afflicted by the law. Therefore the law is not against the promises of God.

Verse 21. For if there had been a law given which bringeth life, surely righteousness should have been by the law.

By these words Paul signifieth that no law of itself is able to quicken or give life, but only killeth. Therefore such works as are done, not only according to the laws and traditions of the pope, but also according to the very law of God, do not justify a man before God, but make him a sinner: they do not pacify the wrath of God, but they kindle it: they obtain not righteousness, but they hinder it: they quicken not, but they kill and destroy. Therefore when he saith, If a law had been given which could have brought life, &c. he teacheth plainly, that the law of itself justifieth not, but that it hath a clean contrary effect.

Although these words of Paul be plain enough, yet are they obscure and utterly unknown to the papists. For if they did understand them indeed, they would not so magnify their free-will, their natural strength, the keeping of the counsels, the works of supererogation, &c. But lest they should seem to be manifestly wicked and plain infidels in denying the words of the apostle of Christ so impudently, they have this pestilent gloss always ready (whereby they pervert the places of Paul concerning the law, which revealeth sin and engendereth wrath, that is to say, the ten commandments), that Paul speaketh only of the ceremonial and not of the moral law. But Paul speaketh plainly when he saith, If a law had been given, &c. And he excepteth no law. Wherefore this gloss of the papists is not worth a rush. For the laws of the ceremonies were as well commanded of God, and as strictly kept, as the moral laws. The Jews also kept circumci-

sion as precisely as they did the sabbath-day. It is evident enough therefore that Paul speaketh of the whole law.

These words of the apostle are sung and said in the papacy, and in all their churches, and yet notwithstanding they both teach and live quite contrary. Paul saith simply, that no law was given to quicken and to bring life; but the Papists teach the contrary, and affirm that many and infinite laws are given to quicken and to bring life. Although they say not this in plain words, yet in very deed such is their opinion, as their monkish religion doth plainly witness, besides many other laws and traditions of men, their works and merits before grace and after, and innumerable wicked ceremonies and false worshippings, which they have devised of their own heads, and those only have they preached, treading the gospel under their feet, and assuredly promising grace, remission of sins, and life everlasting to all such as should keep and accomplish the same. This, I say, cannot be denied; for their books, which are yet extant, give certain testimony thereof.

But contrariwise we affirm with Paul, that there is no law, whether it be man's law or God's law, that giveth life. Therefore we put as great difference between the law and righteousness, as is between life and death, between heaven and hell. And the cause that moveth us so to affirm, is that plain and evident place of Paul, where he saith, that the law is not given to justify, to give life and to save, but only to kill and to destroy, contrary to the opinion of all men; for naturally they can judge no otherwise of the law, but that it is given to work righteousness, and to give life and salvation.

This difference of the offices of the law and of the gospel keepeth all Christian doctrine in his true and proper use. Also it maketh a faithful man judge over all kinds of life, over the laws and decrees of all men, and over all doctrine whatsoever, and it giveth them power to try all manner of spirits. On the other side, the Papists, because they confound and mingle the law and the gospel together, can teach no certainty touching faith, works, the states and conditions of life, nor of the difference of spirits.

Now therefore, after that Paul hath prosecuted his confutations and arguments sufficiently and in good order, he

teacheth that the law (if ye consider his true and perfect use) is nothing else but as a certain schoolmaster to lead us unto righteousness. For it humbleth men, it prepareth and maketh them apt to receive the righteousness of Christ, when it doth his own proper work and office, that is, when it maketh them guilty, terrifieth and bringeth them to the knowledge of sin, wrath, death and hell. For when he hath done this, the opinion of man's own righteousness and holiness vanisheth away, and Christ with his benefits beginneth to wax sweet unto him. Wherefore the law is not against the promises of God, but rather confirmeth them. True it is, that it doth not accomplish the promise, nor bring righteousness: notwithstanding it humbleth us with his exercise and office, and so maketh us more thirsty and more apt to receive the benefit of Christ. Therefore, saith he, if any law had been given which might have brought righteousness, and through righteousness life (for no man can obtain life except first he be righteous), then indeed righteousness should come by the law. Moreover, if there were any state of life, any work, any religion, whereby a man might obtain remission of sins, righteousness and life, then should these things indeed justify and give life. But this is impossible: for,

Verse 22. *The Scripture hath concluded all men under sin.*

Where? First, in the promises themselves as touching Christ, as Genesis iii. The seed of the woman shall break the head of the serpent. And Genesis xxii. In thy seed, &c. Wheresoever then is any promise in the scriptures made unto the fathers concerning Christ, there the blessing is promised, that is, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life. Therefore by the contrary it is evident, that they which must receive the blessing are subject to the curse, that is to say, sin and eternal death: for else to what end was the blessing promised?

Secondly, the scripture shutteth men under sin and under the curse, especially by the law, because it is his peculiar office to reveal sin and engender wrath, as we have declared throughout this epistle, but chiefly by this sentence of Paul: Whosoever are of the works of the law, are under the curse (Gal. iii. 10.): also by that place which the apostle alledgeth out of the 27th chapter of

Deuteronomy: Cursed is every one that abideth not in all the words of this law to do them, &c. For these sentences in plain words do shut under sin and under the curse, not only those which sin manifestly against the law, or do not outwardly accomplish the law: but also those which are under the law, and with all endeavour go about to perform the same, and such were the Jews as before I have said. Much more then doth the same place of Paul shut up under sin, and under the curse, all monks, friars, hermits, Carthusians, and such like, and with their professions, rules, and religions, to the which they attributed such holiness, that when a man had once made a vow of his profession, if he died by and by, they dreamed that he went strait to heaven. But here ye hear plainly, that the scripture shutteth all under sin. Therefore neither the vow nor the religion of the Carthusian, be it never so angelical, is righteousness before God; for the scripture hath shut all under sin, all are accursed and damned. Who pronounceth this sentence? The scripture. And where? First, by this promise: The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. In thee shall be blessed, &c. and such like places: moreover, by the whole law, whereof the principal office is to make men guilty of sin. Therefore no monk, no Carthusian, no Celestine bruise the serpent's head, but they abide bruised and broken under the head of the serpent, that is, under the power of the devil. Who will believe this?

Briefly, whatsoever is without Christ and his promise, whether it be the law of God or the Law of Man, the ceremonial or the moral law, without all exception is shut under sin; for the scripture shutteth all under sin. Now he that saith all, excepteth nothing. Therefore we conclude with Paul, that the policies and laws of all nations, be they never so good and necessary, with all ceremonies and religions, without faith in Christ, are and abide under sin, death, and eternal damnation, except faith in Jesus Christ go withal or rather before, as followeth in the next. Of this matter we have spoken largely before.

Wherefore this is a true proposition: only faith justifieth without works (which notwithstanding our adversaries can by no means abide): for Paul here strongly concludeth that the law doth not quicken nor give life, because it is not given to that end. If then the law do

not justify and give life, much less do works justify. For when Paul saith that the law giveth not life, his meaning is, that works also do not give life. For it is more to say that the law quickeneth and giveth life, than to say that works do quicken and give life. If then the law itself being fulfilled (although it be impossible that it should be accomplished) do not justify, much less do works justify. I conclude therefore that faith only justifieth and bringeth life, without works. Paul cannot suffer this addition, faith joined with works justifieth: but he proceedeth simply by the negative (Rom. iii.), as he doth also before in the second chapter: Therefore by the works of the law (saith he) shall no flesh be justified. And again in this place: The law is not given to bring life.

Verse 22. *That the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ should be given to them that believe.*

He said before that the scripture hath shut all under sin. What! for ever? No; but until the promise should be given. Now, the promise is the inheritance itself, or the blessing promised to Abraham, to wit, the deliverance from the law, sin, death, and the devil, and a free giving of grace, righteousness, salvation, and eternal life. This promise, saith he, is not obtained by any merit, by any law, or by any work; but it is given. To whom? To those that believe. In whom? In Jesus Christ, who is the blessed seed, which hath redeemed all believers from the curse, that they might receive the blessing. These words be not obscure, but plain enough: notwithstanding we must mark them diligently, and weigh well the force and weight thereof. For if all be shut under sin, it followeth that all nations are accursed, and are destitute of the grace of God; also that they are under the wrath of God, and the power of the devil, and that no man can be delivered from them by any other means than by faith in Jesus Christ. With these words therefore Paul inveigheth mightily against the fantastical opinions of the papists and all justiciaries touching the law and works; when he saith, That the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to all believers.

Now, how we should answer to those sentences which speak of works and rewards, I have sufficiently declared before. And the matter requireth not now, that we

should speak any thing of works. For we have not here taken in hand to intreat of works, but of justification; to wit, that it is not obtained by the law and works, since all things are shut under sin and under the curse; but by faith in Christ. When we are out of the matter of justification, we cannot sufficiently praise and magnify those works which are commanded of God. For who can sufficiently commend and set forth the profit and fruit of one only work, which a Christian doth through faith and in faith? Indeed it is more precious than heaven and earth. The whole world therefore is not able to give a worthy recompence to such a good work. Yea the world hath not the grace to magnify the holy works of the faithful as they are worthy, and much less to reward them: for it seeth them not, or if it do, it esteemeth them not as good works, but as most wicked and detestable crimes, and riddeth the world of those which are the doers thereof, as most pestilent plagues to mankind.

So Christ, the Saviour of the world, for a recompence of his incomprehensible and inestimable benefits, was put to the most opprobrious death of the cross. The apostles also bringing the word of grace and eternal life into the world, were counted the off-scouring and outcasts of the whole world. This is the goodly reward which the world giveth for so great and unspeakable benefits. But works done without faith, although they have never so goodly a shew of holiness, are under the curse. Wherefore so far off it is, that the doers thereof should deserve grace, righteousness, and eternal life, that rather they heap sin upon sin. After this manner the Pope, that child of perdition, and all that follow him, do work. So work all meritmongers and heretics, which are fallen from the faith.

Verse 23. But before faith came.

He proceedeth in declaring the profit and necessity of the law. He said before that the law was added for transgressions: not that it was the principal purpose of God to make a law that should bring death and damnation, as he saith, Rom. vii. Was that which was good, saith he, made death unto me? God forbid. For the law is a word that sheweth life, and driveth men unto it. Therefore it is not only given as a minister of death, but the prin-

cipal use and end thereof is to reveal death, that so it might be seen and known how horrible sin is. Notwithstanding it doth not so reveal death as though it tended to no other end but to kill and destroy: but to this end it revealeth death, that when men are terrified, cast down, and humbled, they should fear God. And this doth the 20th chapter of Exodus declare: Fear not (saith Moses), for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before you, that ye sin not (Exod. xx. 20.). The office therefore of the law is to kill, and yet so that God may revive and quicken again. The law then is not given only to kill: but because man is proud, and dreameth that he is wise, righteous, and holy: therefore it is necessary he should be humbled by the law, that so this beast, the opinion of righteousness I say, might be slain: for otherwise no man can obtain life.

Albeit then that the law killeth, yet God useth this effect of the law, this death I mean, to a good end, that is to bring life. For God seeing that this universal plague of the whole world, to wit, man's opinion of his own righteousness, his hypocrisy, and confidence in his own holiness could not be beaten down by any other means, he would that it should be slain by the law; not for ever, but that when it is once slain, man might be raised up again above and beyond the law, and there might hear this voice: Fear not; I have not given the law, and killed thee by the law, that thou shouldest abide in this death; but that thou shouldest fear me and live. For the presuming of good works and righteousness standeth not with the fear of God: and where the fear of God is not, there can be no thirsting for grace or life. God must therefore have a strong hammer, or a mighty maul to break the rocks, and a hot burning fire in the midst of heaven to overthrow the mountains; that is to say, to destroy this furious and obstinate beast (this presumption I say); that when a man, by his bruising and breaking, is brought to nothing, he should despair of his own strength, righteousness, and holiness; and being thus thoroughly terrified, should thirst after mercy and remission of sins.

Verse 23. *But before faith came, we were under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.*

This is to say, before the time of the gospel and grace came, the office of the law was, that we should be shut and kept under the same, as it were, in prison. This is a goodly and a fit similitude, shewing the effect of the law, and how righteous it maketh men; therefore it is diligently to be weighed. No thief, no murderer, no adulterer, or other malefactor, loveth the chains and fetters, the dark and loathsome prison wherein he lieth fast bound; but rather, if he could, he would beat and break into powder the prison with his irons and fetters. Indeed, while he is in his prison, he refraineth from doing of evil; but not of a good will, or for righteousness sake, but because the prison restraineth him that he cannot do it: and now, being fast fettered, he hateth not this theft and his murder (yea, he is sorry with all his heart that he cannot rob and steal, cut and slay), but he hateth the prison; and, if he should escape, he would rob and kill as he did before.

The law shutteth men under sin two ways, civilly and spiritually.

Such is the force of the law and the righteousness that cometh of the law, compelling us to be outwardly good, when it threateneth death or any other punishment to the transgressors thereof. Here we obey the law indeed, but for fear of punishment; that is, unwillingly, and with great indignation. But what righteousness is this, when we abstain from evil for fear of punishment? Wherefore this righteousness of works is indeed nothing else but to love sin and to hate righteousness, to detest God with his law, and to love and reverence that which is most horrible and abominable? For look how heartily the thief loveth the prison and hateth his theft: so gladly do we obey the law in accomplishing that which it commandeth, and avoiding that which it forbiddeth.

Notwithstanding this fruit and this profit the law bringeth, although men's hearts remain never so wicked, that first outwardly and civilly, after a sort, it restraineth

thieves, murderers, and other malefactors. For, if they did not see and understand, that sin is punished in this life by imprisonment, by the gallows, by the sword, and such like, and after this life with eternal damnation and hell-fire, no magistrate should be able to bridle the fury and rage of men by any laws, bonds, or chains. But the threatenings of the law strike a terror into the hearts of the wicked, whereby they are bridled after a sort, that they run not headlong, as otherwise they would do, into all kinds of wickedness. Notwithstanding they would rather that there were no law, no punishment, no hell, and finally no God. If God had no hell, or did not punish the wicked, he should be loved and praised of all men. But because he punisheth the wicked, and all are wicked; therefore inasmuch as they are shut under the law, they can do no otherwise, but mortally hate and blaspheme God.

Furthermore, the law shutteth men under sin, not only civilly, but also spiritually; that is to say, the law is also a spiritual prison, and a very hell. For when it revealeth sin, threateneth death and the eternal wrath of God, a man cannot avoid it, nor find any comfort. For it is not in the power of man to shake off these horrible terrors which the law stirreth up in the conscience, or any other anguish or bitterness of spirit. Hereof come those lamentable complaints of saints, which are every where in the Psalms; In hell, who shall confess thee, &c.? (Psalm vi. 5.) For then is a man shut up in prison, out of the which he cannot escape, nor seeth how he may be delivered out of these bonds, that is to say, these horrible terrors.

Thus the law is a prison both civilly and spiritually. For first, it restraineth and shutteth up the wicked, that they run not headlong, according to their own lust, into all kinds of mischief. Again, it sheweth unto us spiritually our sin, terrifieth and humbleth us, that, when we are so terrified and humbled, we may learn to know our own misery and condemnation. And this is the true and the proper use of the law, so that it be not perpetual. For this shutting and holding under the law, must endure no longer, but until faith come; and when faith cometh, then must this spiritual prison have his end.

Here again we see, that although the law and the gospel be separate far asunder, yet, as touching the inward

affections, they are very nearly joined the one with the other. This Paul sheweth when he saith, We were kept under the law; and shut up unto the faith which should be revealed unto us. Wherefore it is not enough that we are shut under the law: for if nothing else should follow, we should be driven to desperation, and die in our sins. But Paul addeth moreover, that we are shut up, and kept under a school-master (which is the law), not for ever, but to bring us unto Christ, who is the end of the law. Therefore this terrifying, this humbling, and this shutting up must not always continue, but only until faith be revealed; that is, it shall so long continue, as shall be for our profit and our salvation: so that when we are cast down and humbled by the law, then grace, remission of sins, deliverance from the law, sin, and death, may become sweet unto us; which are not obtained by works, but are received by faith alone.

He which, in time of temptation, can join these two things together, so repugnant and contrary; that is to say, which, when he is thoroughly terrified and cast down by the law, doth know that the end of the law, and the beginning of grace, or of faith to be revealed, is now come, useth the law rightly. All the wicked are utterly ignorant of this knowledge and this cunning. Cain knew it not when he was shut up in the prison of the law; that is, he felt no terror, although he had now killed his brother; but dissembled the matter craftily, and thought that God was ignorant thereof. Am I my brother's keeper, saith he? but when he heard this word, What hast thou done? behold the voice of the blood of thy brother crieth unto me from the earth (Gen. iv. 9.), he began to feel this prison indeed. What did he then? He remained still shut up in prison. He joined not the gospel with the law, but said, My punishment is greater than I can bear, verse 13. He only respected the prison, not considering that his sin was revealed unto him to this end, that he should fly unto God for mercy and pardon. Therefore he despaired and denied God. He believed not that he was shut up to this end, that grace and faith might be revealed unto him; but only that he should still remain in the prison of the law.

These words, to be kept under, and to be shut up, are not vain and unprofitable, but most true, and of great importance. This keeping under, and this prison signifieth

the true and spiritual terrors, whereby the conscience is so shut up, that in the wide world it can find no place where it may be in safety. Yea, as long as these terrors endure, the conscience feeleth such anguish and sorrow, that it thinketh heaven and earth, yea if they were ten times more wide and large than they are, to be straiter and narrower than a mouse-hole. Here is a man utterly destitute of all wisdom, strength, righteousness, counsel, and succour. For the conscience is a marvellous tender thing, and therefore when it is so shut up under the prison of the law, it seeth no way how to get out; and this straitness seemeth daily so to increase, as though it would never have an end. For then doth it feel the wrath of God which is infinite and inestimable, whose hand it cannot escape, as the 139th psalm witnesseth: Whither shall I fly from thy presence, &c.

Like as therefore this worldly prison or shutting up is a bodily affliction, and he that is so shut up can have no use of his body: even so the trouble and anguish of mind is a spiritual prison, and he that is shut up in this prison cannot enjoy the quietness of heart and peace of conscience. And yet it is not so for ever (as reason judgeth when it feeleth this prison), but until faith be revealed. The silly conscience therefore must be raised up, and comforted after this sort: Brother, thou art indeed shut up; but persuade thyself that this is not done to the end that thou shouldest remain in this prison for ever. For it is written, that we are shut up unto the faith which shall be revealed. Thou art then afflicted in this prison, not to thy destruction, but that thou mayest be refreshed by the blessed seed. Thou art killed by the law, that through Christ thou mayest be quickened again, and restored to life. Despair not therefore, as Cain, Saul, and Judas did, who being thus shut up, looked no farther but to their dark prison, and there still remained: therefore they despaired. But thou must take another way in these terrors of conscience than they did: that is, thou must know that it is well done, and good for thee to be so shut up, confounded, and brought to nothing. Use therefore this shutting up rightly, and as thou shouldest do: that is, to the end that when the law hath done his office, faith may be revealed. For God doth not therefore afflict thee, that thou shouldest still remain in this affliction. He will not kill thee that thou shouldest

abide in death. I will not the death of a sinner, &c. (saith he by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xxxiii. 11.). But he will afflict thee that so thou mayest be humbled, and know that thou hast need of mercy, and the benefit of Christ.

This holding in prison then under the law must not always endure, but must only continue to the coming or revealing of faith, which this sweet verse of the Psalm doth teach us: The Lord delighteth in those that fear him (Psalm cxlvii. 11.); that is to say, which are in prison under the law. But by-and-by after he addeth, And in those that attend upon his mercy. Therefore we must join these two things together, which indeed are as contrary one to the other as may be. For what can be more contrary than to hate and abhor the wrath of God: and again to trust in his goodness and mercy? The one is hell, the other is heaven, and yet they must be nearly joined together in the heart. By speculation and naked knowledge a man may easily join them together; but by experience and inward practice so to do, of all things it is the hardest, which I myself have often proved by mine own experience. Of this matter the papists and sectaries know nothing at all. Therefore these words of Paul are to them obscure and altogether unknown: and when the law revealeth unto them their sin, accuseth and terrifieth them, they can find no counsel, no rest, no help or succour; but fall to desperation, as Cain and Saul did.

Seeing the law therefore (as is said) is our tormentor and our prison, certain it is that we cannot love it, but hate it. He therefore that saith he loveth the law, is a liar, and knoweth not what he saith. A thief and a robber should shew himself stark mad, that would love the prison, the fetters and chains. Seeing then the law shutteth us up, and holdeth us in prison, it cannot be but we must needs be extreme enemies to the law. To conclude, so well we love the law and the righteousness thereof, as a murderer loveth the dark prison, the strait bonds and irons. How then should the law justify us?

Verse 23. *And shut up under the faith, which should after
be revealed.*

This Paul speaketh in respect of the fulness of the time wherein Christ came. But we must apply it not

only to that time, but also to the inward man. For that which is done as an history, and according to the time wherein Christ came, abolishing the law, and bringing liberty and eternal life to light, is always done spiritually in every Christian: in whom is found continually, some while the time of the law, and some while the time of grace. For the Christian man hath a body, in whose members (as Paul saith in another place) sin dwelleth and warreth. Now I understand sin to be, not only the deed or the work, but also the root and the tree, together with the fruits, as the scripture useth to speak of sin, which is yet not only rooted in the baptized flesh of every Christian, but also is at deadly war within it, and holdeth it captive: if not to give consent unto it, or to accomplish the work, yet doth it force him mightily thereunto. For albeit a Christian man do not fall into outward and gross sins, as murder, adultery, theft, and such like; yet is he not free from impatency, murmuring, hating and blaspheming of God; which sins to reason and the carnal man are altogether unknown. These sins constrain him, yea sore against his will, to detest the law: they compel him to fly from the presence of God: they compel him to hate and blaspheme God. For as carnal lust is strong in a young man, in a man of full age the desire and love of glory, and in an old man covetousness: even so in a holy and a faithful man impatency, murmuring, hatred, and blasphemy against God do mightily prevail. Examples hereof there are many in the Psalms, in Job, in Jeremy, and throughout the whole scripture. Paul, therefore describing and setting forth this spiritual warfare, useth very vehement words and fit for the purpose, as of fighting, rebelling, holding and leading captive, &c.

Both these times then (of the law and the gospel I mean) are in a Christian, as touching the affections and inward man. The time of the law is when the law exerciseth me, tormenteth me with heaviness of heart, oppresseth me, bringeth me to the knowledge of sin, and increaseth the same. Here the law is in his true use and perfect work: which a Christian oftentimes feeleth as long as he liveth. So there was given unto Paul a prick in the flesh, that is, the angel of Satan to buffet him (2 Cor. xii. 7.). He would gladly have felt every moment the joy of conscience, the laughter of the heart, and the sweet taste of

eternal life. Again, he would gladly have been delivered from all trouble and anguish of spirit, and therefore he desired that this temptation might be taken from him. Notwithstanding this was not done, but the Lord said unto him, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my power is made perfect through weakness (2 Cor. xii. 9.). This battle doth every Christian feel. To speak of myself, there are many hours in the which I chide and contend with God, and impatiently resist him. The wrath and judgment of God displeaseth me: and again, my impatiency, my murmuring, and such like sins do displease him. And this is the time of the law, under the which a Christian man continually liveth as touching the flesh. For the flesh lusteth continually against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh (Gal. v. 17.), but in some more and in some less.

The time of grace is, when the heart is raised up again by the promise of the free mercy of God, and saith, Why art thou heavy, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me? (Psalm xlii. 5, 11.). Dost thou see nothing but the law, sin, terror, heaviness, desperation, death, hell, and the devil? Is there not also grace, remission of sins, righteousness, consolation, joy, peace, life, heaven, Christ, and God? Trouble me no more, O my soul. What is the law, what is sin, what are all evils in comparison of these things? Trust in God, who hath not spared his own dear son, but hath given him to the death of the cross for thy sins. This is then to be shut up under the law after the flesh, not for ever, but till Christ be revealed. Therefore, when thou art beaten down, tormented, and afflicted by the law, then say: Lady Law, thou art not alone, neither art thou all things; but besides thee there are yet other things much greater and better than thou art, namely, grace, faith, and blessing. This grace, this faith, and this blessing do not accuse me, terrify me, condemn me; but they comfort me, they bid me trust in the Lord, and promise unto me victory and salvation in Christ. There is no cause therefore why I should despair.

He that is skilful in this art and cunning may indeed be called a right divine. The fantastical spirits and their disciples at this day, which continually brag of the spirit, do persuade themselves that they are very expert and cunning therein. But I, and such as I am, have scarcely

learned the first principles thereof. It is learned indeed, but so long as the flesh and sin do endure, it can never be perfectly learned and as it should be. So then a Christian is divided into two times: in that he is flesh, he is under the law; in that he is spirit, he is under grace. Concupiscence, covetousness, ambition, and pride do always cleave to the flesh, also ignorance, contempt of God, impatience, murmuring and grudging against God, because he hindereth and breaketh off our counsels, our devices and enterprises, and because he speedily punisheth not such as are wicked, rebellious and contemptuous persons, &c. Such manner of sins are rooted in the flesh of the faithful. Wherefore, if thou behold nothing but the flesh, thou shalt abide always under the time of the law. But these days must be shortened, or else no flesh should be saved. The law must have his time appointed, wherein it must have his end. The time of the law therefore is not perpetual, but hath his end, which end is Jesus Christ. But the time of grace is eternal. For Christ being once dead, dieth no more (Rom. vi. 9.). He is eternal; therefore the time of grace also is eternal.

Such notable sentences in Paul, we may not lightly pass over, as the papists and sectaries are wont to do. For they contain words of life, which do wonderfully comfort and confirm afflicted consciences, and they which know and understand them well, can judge of faith: they can discern a true fear from a false fear: they can judge of all inward affections of the heart, and discern all spirits. The fear of God is an holy and a precious thing, but it must not always continue. Indeed it ought to be always in a Christian, because sin is always in him: but it must not be alone: for then is it the fear of Cain, Saul, and Judas; that is to say, a servile and a desperate fear. A Christian therefore must vanquish fear by faith in the word of grace. He must turn away his eyes from the time of the law, and look unto Christ and unto faith which is to be revealed. Here beginneth fear to be sweet unto us, and maketh us to delight in God. For if a man do only behold the law and sin, setting faith aside, he shall never be able to put away fear, but shall at length fall to desperation.

Thus doth Paul very well distinguish the time of the law and grace. Let us also learn rightly to distinguish the time of them both, not in words, but in the inward

affection: which is a very hard matter. For albeit these two things are separate far asunder, yet are they most nearly joined together in one heart. Nothing is joined more nearly together than fear and trust, than the law and the gospel, than sin and grace. For they are so united together, that the one is swallowed up of the other. Wherefore there is no conjunction like unto this.

At this place, Wherefore then serveth the law? Paul began to dispute of the law: also of the use and abuse thereof, taking occasion of that which before he had affirmed, that the faithful do obtain righteousness by grace only, and by the promise, and not by the law. Upon that disputation rose this question, Wherefore then serveth the law? - For reason hearing that righteousness or the blessing is obtained by grace and by the promise, by-and-by inferreth: Then the law profiteth nothing. Wherefore the doctrine of the law must be diligently considered, that we may know what and how we ought to judge thereof, lest that either we reject the same altogether, as the fantastical spirits do (which in the year a thousand five hundred twenty-five, stirring up the rustical people to sedition, said, that the liberty of the gospel giveth freedom to all men from all manner of laws); or else lest we should attribute the force of justification to the law. For both sorts do offend against the law: the one on the right hand, which will be justified by the law, and the other on the left hand, which will be clean delivered from the law. We must therefore keep the highway, so that we neither reject the law, nor attribute more unto it than we ought to do.

That which I have before so often repeated concerning both the uses of the law, namely, the civil and the spiritual use, do sufficiently declare that the law is not given for the righteous; but (as Paul saith in another place) for the unrighteous and rebellious. Now, of the unrighteous there are two sorts, that is to say, they which are to be justified, and they which are not to be justified. They that are not to be justified must be bridled by the civil use of the law; for they must be bound with the bonds of the law, as savage and untamed beasts are bound with cords and chains. This use of the law hath no end; and of this Paul here speaketh nothing. But they that are to be justified, are exercised with the spiritual use of the law for a time: for it doth not always continue, as the

civil use of the law doth: but it looketh to faith which is to be revealed, and when Christ cometh it shall have his end. Hereby we may plainly see, that all the sentences wherein Paul intreateth of the spiritual use of the law, must be understood of those which are to be justified, and not of those which are justified already. For they which are justified already, inasmuch as they abide in Christ, are far above all law. The law then must be laid upon those that are to be justified, that they may be shut up in the prison thereof, until the righteousness of faith come: not that they attain this righteousness through the law (for that were not to use the law rightly, but to abuse it); but that when they are cast down and humbled by the law, they should fly unto Christ, who is the end of the law to righteousness, to every one that believeth (Rom. x. 4.).

Now, the abusers of the law are first of all the justiciaries and hypocrites, which dream that men are justified by the law. For that use of the law doth not exercise and drive a man to faith which is to be revealed, but it maketh careless arrogant hypocrites, swelling and presuming of the righteousness of the law, and hindereth the righteousness of faith. Secondly, they abuse the law, which will utterly exempt a Christian man from the law, as the brain-sick anabaptists went about to do; which was the occasion that they raised up that sedition of the rustic people. Of this sort there are very many also at this day which profess the gospel with us: who being delivered from the tyranny of the Pope by the doctrine of the gospel, do dream that the Christian liberty is a dissolute and a carnal liberty to do whatsoever they list. These (as Peter saith, 1 Pet. ii. 16.) have the liberty of the spirit as a cloak of maliciousness, through which the name of God and the gospel of Christ is slandered every where, and therefore they shall once suffer worthy punishment for this their ungodliness. Thirdly, such do also abuse the law, who feeling the terrors thereof, do not understand that such terrors ought no longer to continue, but unto Christ. This abuse in them is the cause that they fall to desperation; as in the hypocrites it is the cause of arrogance and presumption.

Contrariwise, the true use of the law can never be esteemed and magnified as it is worthy, namely, that when the conscience shut up under the law despaireth not, but being instructed by the wisdom of the Holy

Ghost, concludeth with itself after this sort: I am indeed shut up as a prisoner under the law, but not for ever: yea, this shutting up shall turn to my great profit. How so? Because that I being thus shut up, shall be driven to sigh and seek the hand of an helper, &c. After this manner the law is an inforcer, which by compulsion bringeth the hungry unto Christ, that he may satisfy them with his good things. Wherefore the true office of the law is to shew unto us our sins, to make us guilty, to humble us; to kill us, and to bring us down to hell, and finally to take from us all help, all succour, all comfort; but yet altogether to this end, that we may be justified, exalted, quickened to life, carried up into heaven, and obtain all good things. Therefore it doth not only kill, but it killeth that we may live.

Verse 24. *Wherefore the law was our school-master to bring us to Christ.*

Here again he joineth the law and the gospel together (which are separate so far asunder), as touching the affections and inward man, when he saith, The law is a school-master to Christ. This similitude also of the school-master is worthy to be noted. Although a school-master be very profitable and necessary to instruct and to bring up children, yet shew me one child or scholar which loveth his master. What love and obedience the Jews shewed unto their Moses, it appeareth in that every hour (as the history witnesseth) they would with all their hearts have stoned him to death (Exod. xvii. 4.). It is not possible therefore that the scholar should love his master. For how can he love him which keepeth him in prison, that is to say, which suffereth him not to do that which gladly he would? And if he do any thing against his commandment, by-and-by he is rebuked and chastised, yea and is constrained moreover to kiss the rod, when he is beaten. Is not this (I pray you) a goodly righteousness and obedience of the scholar, that he obeyeth his master severely threatening and so sharply correcting him, and kisseth the rod? But doth he thus with a good will? As soon as his master hath turned his back, he breaketh the rod, or casteth it into the fire. And if he had any power over his master, he would not suffer himself to be beaten of him, but rather he would beat

him. And notwithstanding, the school-master is very necessary for the child, to instruct and to chastise him: otherwise the child, without his discipline, instruction, and good education, should be utterly lost.

The school-master therefore is appointed for the child to teach him, to bring him up, and to keep him, as it were, in prison. But to what end, or how long? Is it to the end that this strict and sharp dealing of the school-master should always continue? or that the child should remain in continual bondage? Not so, but only for a time, that this obedience, this prison, and correction might turn to the profit of the child, that when the time cometh he might be his father's heir. For it is not the father's will that his son should be always subject to the school-master, and always beaten with rods: but that by his instruction and discipline he might be made able and meet to be his father's successor.

Even so the law (saith Paul) is nothing else but a school-master: not for ever, but until it have brought us to Christ: as in other words, he said also before: The law was given for transgressions until the blessed seed should come. Also, the scripture hath shut all under sin, &c. Again, we were kept under, and shut up unto faith which should after be revealed. Wherefore the law is not only a school-master, but it is a school-master to bring us unto Christ. For what a school-master were he which would always torment and beat the child, and teach him nothing at all? And yet such school-masters there were in time past, when schools were nothing else but a prison and a very hell, the school-masters cruel tyrants and very butchers. The children were always beaten, they learned with continual pain and travail, and yet few of them came to any proof. The law is not such a school-master. For it doth not only terrify and torment (as the foolish school-master beateth his scholars and teacheth them nothing), but with his rods he driveth us unto Christ: like as a good school-master instructeth and exerciseth his scholars in reading and writing, to the end that they may come to the knowledge of good letters and other profitable things, that afterwards they may have a delight in doing of that, which before when they were constrained thereunto, they did against their wills.

By this goodly similitude Paul sheweth what is the true use of the law, namely, that it justifieth not hypocrites,

for they remain without Christ in their presumption and security: and contrariwise, that it leaveth not in death and damnation those that are of a contrite heart (so that they use it as Paul teacheth), but driveth them unto Christ. But they which in these terrors continue still in their wickedness, and do not apprehend Christ by faith, do fall at length into desperation. Paul, therefore, in this allegory of the school-master, most lively expresseth the true use of the law. For like as the school-master reproveth his scholars, grieveth them, and maketh them heavy, and yet not to the end that this bondage should always continue, but that it should cease when the children are well brought up and instructed accordingly, and that afterwards, without any constraint of the school-master, they should cheerfully enjoy their liberty and their father's goods; even so they which are vexed and oppressed with the law do know that these terrors and vexations shall not always continue, but that thereby they are prepared to come unto Christ which is to be revealed, and so to receive the liberty of the spirit, &c.

Verse 24. That we may be made righteous by faith.

The law is not a school-master to bring us unto another law-giver which requireth good works, but unto Christ our justifier and saviour, that by faith in him we might be justified, and not by works. But when a man feeleth the force and strength of the law, he doth not understand nor believe this. Therefore he saith, I have lived wickedly; for I have transgressed all the commandments of God, and therefore I am guilty of eternal death. If God would prolong my life certain years, or at least certain months, I would amend my life, and live holily hereafter. Here, of the true use of the law he maketh an abuse. Reason being overtaken in these terrors and straits, is bold to promise unto God the fulfilling of all the works of the whole law. And hereof came so many sects and swarms of monks and religious hypocrites, so many ceremonies and so many works, devised to deserve grace and remission of sins. And they which devised these things, thought that the law was a school-master to lead them not unto Christ, but to a new law, or unto Christ as a law-giver, and not as one that hath abolished the law.

But the true use of the law is to teach me that I am brought to the knowledge of my sin, and humbled, that so I may come unto Christ, and may be justified by faith. But faith is neither law nor work, but an assured confidence which apprehendeth Christ, who is the end of the law (Rom. x.). And how? Not that he hath abolished the old law, and given a new; or that he is a judge which must be pacified by works, as the papists have taught: but he is the end of the law to all those that believe; that is to say, every one that believeth in him is righteous, and the law shall never accuse him. The law then is good, holy, and just, so that a man use it as he should do. Now, they that abuse the law are first the hypocrites which attribute unto the law a power to justify: and secondly, they which do despair, not knowing that the law is a school-master to lead men unto Christ; that is to say, that the law humbleth them not to their destruction, but to their salvation: for God woundeth that he may heal again; he killeth that he may quicken again.

Now Paul, as before I have said, speaketh of those that are to be justified, and not of those which are justified already. Therefore when thou goest about to reason as concerning the law, thou must take the matter of the law, or that whereupon the law worketh, namely, the sinner and the wicked person, whom the law justifieth not, but setteth sin before his eyes, casteth him down, and bringeth him to the knowledge of himself: it sheweth unto him hell, the wrath, and the judgment of God. This is indeed the proper office of the law. Then followeth the use of this office, to wit, that the sinner may know that the law doth not reveal unto him his sin, and thus humbleth him, to the end he should despair; but that by this accusing and bruising, it may drive him unto Christ the saviour and comforter. When this is done, he is no longer under the schoolmaster. And this use is very necessary. For seeing the whole world is overwhelmed with sin, it hath need of this ministry of the law, that sin may be revealed; otherwise no man should ever attain to righteousness, as before we have largely declared. But what worketh the law in them that are already justified by Christ? Paul answereth by these words, which are as it were an addition to that which goeth before.

Verse 25. *But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master.*

That is to say, we are free from the law, from the prison and from our schoolmaster; for when faith is revealed, the law terrifieth and tormenteth us no more. Paul here speaketh of faith as it was preached and published to the world by Christ in the time before appointed. For Christ taking upon him our flesh, came once into the world: he abolished the law with all his effects, and delivered from eternal death all those which receive his benefit by faith. If therefore ye look unto Christ, and that which he hath done, there is now no law. For he, coming in the time appointed, took away the law. Now, since the law is gone, we are not kept under the tyranny thereof any more; but we live in joy and safety under Christ, who now sweetly reigneth in us by his spirit. Now where the Lord reigneth, there is liberty. Wherefore, if we could perfectly apprehend Christ, which hath abolished the law by his death, and hath reconciled us unto his Father, that school-master should have no power over us at all. But the law of the members rebelling against the law of the mind, letteth us, that we cannot perfectly lay hold upon Christ. The lack therefore is not in Christ, but in us, which have not yet put off this flesh, to which sin continually cleaveth as long as we live. Wherefore, as touching ourselves, we are partly free from the law, and partly under the law. According to the spirit we serve with Paul, the law of God; but according to the flesh the law of sin (Rom. vii.).

Hereof it followeth, that, as touching the conscience, we are fully delivered from the law, and therefore that school-master must not rule in it; that is, he must not afflict it with his terrors, threatenings, and captivity. And albeit it go about so to do never so much, yet is not the conscience moved therewith; for it hath Christ crucified before her eyes, who hath removed all the offices of the law out of the conscience, putting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, &c. (Col. ii.) Therefore, even as a virgin knoweth no man, so the conscience must not only be ignorant of the law, but also it must be utterly dead unto the law, and the law likewise unto the conscience. This is not done by any

works, or by the righteousness of the law, but by faith, which apprehendeth and layeth hold upon Christ. Notwithstanding sin cleaveth still in the flesh as touching the effect thereof, which oftentimes accuseth and troubleth the conscience. So long then as the flesh doth remain, so long this school-master the law doth also remain, which many times terrifieth the conscience, and maketh it heavy, by revealing of sin and threatening of death. Yet is it raised up again by the daily coming of Christ: who, as he came once into the world in the time before appointed, to redeem us from the hard and sharp servitude of our school-master: even so he cometh daily unto us spiritually, to the end that we may increase in faith and in the knowledge of him, that the conscience may apprehend him more fully and perfectly from day to day, and that the law of flesh and of sin, with the terror of death and all evils that the law bringeth with it, may daily be diminished in us more and more. As long then as we live in the flesh, which is not without sin, the law oftentimes returneth and doth his office, in one more and in another less, as their faith is strong or weak, and yet not to their destruction, but to their salvation. For this is the exercise of the law in the saints, namely, the continual mortification of the flesh, of reason, and of our own strength, and the daily renewing of our inward man, as it is said in 2 Cor. iv.

We receive then the first-fruits of the spirit: the leaven is hid in the mass of the dough; but all the dough is not yet leavened: now it is yet but only begun to be leavened. If I behold the leaven, I see nothing else but pure leaven. But if I behold the whole mass, I see that it is not all pure leaven; that is to say, if I behold Christ, I am altogether pure and holy, knowing nothing at all of the law; for Christ is my leaven. But if I behold my own flesh, I feel in myself covetousness, lust, anger, pride, and arrogancy; also the fear of death, heaviness, hatred, murmuring, and impatiency against God. The more these sins are in me, the more Christ is absent from me; or if he be present, he is felt but a little. Here have we need of a school-master to exercise and vex this strong ass the flesh, that by this exercise sins may be diminished, and a way prepared unto Christ. For as Christ came once corporally at the time appointed, abolished the whole law, vanquished sin, destroyed death and hell;

even so he cometh spiritually without ceasing, and daily quencheth and killeth these sins in us.

This I say, that thou mayest be able to answer, if any shall thus object: Christ came into the world, and at once took away all our sins, and cleansed us by his blood: what need we then to hear the gospel, or to receive the sacraments? True it is, that inasmuch as thou beholdest Christ, the law and sin are quite abolished. But Christ is not yet come unto thee; yet if he be come, yet notwithstanding there are remnants of sin in thee; thou art not yet thoroughly leavened. For where concupiscence, heaviness of spirit, and fear of death is, there is yet also the law and sin. Christ is not yet thoroughly come: but when he cometh indeed, he driveth away fear and heaviness, and bringeth peace and quietness of conscience. So far forth then as I do apprehend Christ by faith, so much is the law abolished unto me. But my flesh, the world, and the devil do hinder faith in me, that it cannot be perfect. Right gladly I would that that little light of faith which is in my heart were spread throughout all my body, and all the members thereof: but it is not done: it is not by-and-by spread, but only beginneth to be spread. In the mean season this is our consolation, that we having the first fruits of the spirit, do now begin to be leavened. But we shall be thoroughly leavened when this body of sin is dissolved, and we shall rise new creatures wholly, together with Christ.

Albeit then that Christ be one and the same yesterday, to-day, and shall be for ever (Heb. xiii. 8.); and albeit that all the faithful which were before Christ had the gospel and faith; yet notwithstanding Christ came once in the time before determined. Faith also came once when the apostles preached and published the gospel throughout the world. Moreover, Christ cometh also spiritually every day. Faith likewise cometh daily by the word of the gospel. Now, when faith is come, the school-master is constrained to give place with his heavy and grievous office. Christ cometh also spiritually, when we still more and more do know and understand those things which by him are given unto us, and increase in grace and in the knowledge of him (2 Peter, iii.).

Verse 26. For ye are all the Sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul, as a true and an excellent teacher of faith, hath always these words in his mouth, by faith, in faith, of faith, which is in Christ Jesus. He saith not, Ye are the children of God, because ye are circumcised, because ye have heard the law, and have done the works thereof (as the Jews do imagine, and the false apostles teach), but by faith in Jesus Christ. The law then maketh us not children of God, and much less men's traditions. It cannot beget us into a new nature, or a new birth; but it setteth before us the old birth, whereby we were born to the kingdom of the devil; and so it prepareth us to a new birth, which is by faith in Jesus Christ, and not by the law, as Paul plainly witnesseth; For ye are all the sons of God by faith, &c. As if he said, Albeit ye be tormented, humbled, and killed by the law, yet hath not the law made you righteous, or made you the children of God: this is the work of faith alone. What Faith? Faith in Christ. Faith therefore in Christ maketh us the children of God, and not the law. The same thing witnesseth also St. John: He gave power to as many as believed in him, to be the children of God (John i. 12 Rom. viii. 16, 17.). What tongue, either of men or angels, can sufficiently extol and magnify the great mercy of God towards us, that we, which are miserable sinners and by nature the children of wrath, should be called to his grace and glory, to be made the children and heirs of God, fellow-heirs with the son of God, and Lords over heaven and earth, and that by the only means of our faith which is in Christ Jesu!

Verse 27. For all ye that are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.

To put on Christ is taken two manner of ways, according to the law and according to the gospel. According to the law, as it is said in chap. xiii. to the Romans: Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, follow the example and virtues of Christ. Do that which he did, and suffer that which he suffered. And in 1 Pet. ii. Christ hath suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should

follow his steps. Now we see in Christ a singular patience, an inestimable mildness of love, and a wonderful modesty in all things. This goodly apparel we must put on, that is to say, follow these virtues.

But the putting on of Christ according to the gospel, consisteth not in imitation, but in a new birth and a new creation; that is to say, in putting on Christ's innocency, his righteousness, his wisdom, his power, his saving health, his life and his spirit. We are clothed with a leather coat of Adam, which is a mortal garment, and a garment of sin; that is to say, we are all subject unto sin, all sold under sin; there is in us horrible blindness, ignorance, contempt and hatred of God; moreover, evil concupiscence, uncleanness, covetousness, &c. This garment, that is to say, this corrupt and sinful nature, we receive from Adam; which Paul is wont to call the old man. This old man must be put off with all his works (Eph. iv. Col. i.), that of the children of Adam we may be made the children of God. This is not done by changing of a garment, or by any laws or works, but by a new birth, and by the renewing of the inward man, which is done in baptism, as Paul saith; All ye that are baptized, have put on Christ. Also, according to his mercy he hath saved us by the washing of the new birth, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost (Tit. iii.). For besides that they which are baptized are regenerated and renewed by the Holy Ghost to a heavenly righteousness and to eternal life, there riseth in them also a new light and a new flame; there rise in them new and holy affections, as the fear of God, true faith, and assured hope, &c. There beginneth in them also a new will. And this is to put on Christ truly, and according to the gospel.

Therefore the righteousness of the law, or of our own works, is not given unto us in baptism; but Christ himself is our garment. Now Christ is no law, no law-giver, no work; but a divine and an inestimable gift, whom God hath given unto us, that he might be our justifier, our saviour, and our redeemer. Wherefore, to be apparelled with Christ according to the gospel, is not to be apparelled with the law or with works, but with an incomparable gift; that is to say, with remission of sins, righteousness, peace, consolation, joy of spirit, salvation, life, and Christ himself.

This is diligently to be noted, because of the fond and

fantastical spirits, which go about to deface the majesty of baptism, and speak wickedly of it. Paul contrariwise commendeth and setteth it forth with honourable titles, calling it the washing of the new birth, the renewing of the Holy Ghost (Tit. iii.). And here also he saith, that all they which are baptized have put on Christ. As if he said, Ye are carried out of the law into a new birth, which is wrought in baptism. Therefore ye are not now any longer under the law, but ye are clothed with a new garment, to wit, with the righteousness of Christ. Wherefore baptism is a thing of great force and efficacy. Now, when we are apparelled with Christ, as with the robe of our righteousness and salvation, then we must put on Christ also as the apparel of imitation and example. These things I have handled more largely in another place, therefore I here briefly pass them over.

Verse 28. *There is neither Jew nor Grecian, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Here might be added moreover many more names of persons and offices which are ordained of God, as these, there is neither magistrate nor subject, neither teacher nor hearer; neither school-master nor scholar, neither master nor servant, neither mistress nor maid, &c. for in Christ Jesu all states, yea even such as are ordained of God, are nothing. Indeed the male, the female, the bond, the free, the Jew, the Gentile, the prince, the subject, are the good creatures of God; but in Christ, that is, in the matter of salvation they are nothing, with all their wisdom, righteousness, religion, and power.

Wherefore, with these words, There is neither Jew, &c. Paul mightily abolisheth the law. For here, that is, when a man is renewed by baptism, and hath put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Grecian, &c. The apostle speaketh not here of the Jew according to his nature and substance, but he calleth him a Jew which is the disciple of Moses, is subject to the law, is circumcised, and with all his endeavour keepeth the ceremonies commanded in the law. Where Christ is put on, saith he, there is neither Jew, nor circumcision, nor ceremony of the law any more; for Christ hath abolished all the laws of Moses that ever were. Wherefore the con-

science, believing in Christ, must be so surely persuaded that the law is abolished, with all his terrors and threatenings, that it should be utterly ignorant whether there were ever any Moses, any law, or any Jew. For Christ and Moses can in no wise agree. Moses came with the law, with many works, and with many ceremonies; but Christ came without any law, without any exacting of works, giving grace and righteousness, &c. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John i. 17.).

Moreover when he saith, nor Grecian, he also rejecteth and condemneth the wisdom and righteousness of the Gentiles. For among the Gentiles there were many notable men, as Xenophon, Themistocles, Marcus, Fabius, Attilius Regulus, Cicero, Pomponius, Atticus, and many other, which being endued with singular virtues, governed commonweals excellently, and did many worthy acts for the preservation thereof; and yet all these were nothing before God, with their wisdom, their power, their notable acts, their excellent virtues, laws, religions, and ceremonies: for we must not think that the Gentiles did condemn all honesty and religion. Yea all nations of all ages dispersed throughout the world had their laws, religions, and ceremonies, without the which it is not possible that mankind should be governed. All righteousness therefore concerning either the government of families, or commonweals, or divine matters (as was the righteousness of the law), with all the obedience, execution, and holiness thereof, be it never so perfect, is nothing worth before God. What then? The garment of Christ, which we put on in baptism.

So, if the servant do his duty, obey his master, serve in his vocation never so diligently and faithfully; if he that is at liberty be in authority and govern the commonwealth, and guide his own family honestly and with praise; if the man do that pertaineth to the man in marrying a wife, in governing his family, in obeying the magistrate, in behaving himself decently towards all men; if the woman live chastely, obey her husband, see well to her household, bring up her children godly (which are indeed excellent gifts and holy works), yet are all these nothing in comparison of that righteousness which is before God: to be brief, all the laws, ceremonies, religions, righteousness, and works in the whole world,

yea of the Jews themselves, which were the first that had the kingdom and priesthood ordained and appointed of God, with their holy laws, religions, ceremonies, and worshippings, all these (I say) take not away sin, deliver not from death, nor purchase life.

Therefore your false apostles do subtilly seduce you (O ye Galatians), when they teach you that the law is necessary to salvation; and by this means they spoil you of that excellent glory of your new birth and your adoption, and call you back to your old birth, and to the most miserable servitude of the law, making you of the free children of God, bond children of the law, whilst they will have a difference of persons according to the law. Indeed there is a difference of persons in the law, and in the world, and there it ought to be, but not before God. All have sinned, and are destitute of the glory of God (Rom. iii. 23.). Let the Jews, therefore, the Gentiles, and the whole world keep silence in the presence of God. God hath indeed many ordinances, laws, degrees, and kinds of life, but all these help nothing to deserve grace, and to obtain eternal life. So many as are justified therefore, are justified, not by the observation of man's law, or God's law, but by Christ alone, who hath abolished all laws. Him alone doth the gospel set forth unto us for a pacifier of God's wrath by the shedding of his own blood, and a saviour; and without faith in him, neither shall the Jew be saved by the law, nor the monk by his order, nor the Grecian by his wisdom, nor the magistrate or master by his upright government, nor the servant by his obedience.

Verse 28. For ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

These are excellent words. In the world, and according to the flesh, there is great difference and inequality of persons, and the same must be diligently observed. For if the woman would be the man, if the son would be the father, if the servant would be the master, the subject would be the magistrate, there should be nothing else but a confusion of all states and of all things. Contrariwise, in Christ there is no law, no difference of persons; there is neither Jew nor Grecian, but all are one. For there is but one body, one spirit, one hope of vocation: there is one gospel, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father

of all, one Christ and Lord of all (Eph. iv. 4.). We have the same Christ, I, thou, and all the faithful, which Peter, Paul, and all the saints had. Here therefore the conscience knoweth nothing of the law, but hath Christ only before her eyes. Therefore Paul is always wont to add this clause, In Christ Jesu: who, if he be taken out of our sight, then cometh anguish and terror.

The Popish school-divines do dream that faith is a quality cleaving in the heart without Christ. This is a devilish error. But Christ should be so set forth, that thou shouldest see nothing besides him, and shouldest think that nothing can be more near unto thee, or more present within thy heart than he is. For he sitteth not idly in heaven; but is present with us, working and living in us. As he saith before in the second chapter: I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And here likewise: Ye have put on Christ. Faith therefore is a certain steadfast beholding, which looketh upon nothing else but Christ the conqueror of sin and death, and the giver of righteousness, salvation, and eternal life. This is the cause that Paul nameth and setteth forth Jesus Christ so often in his epistles, yea almost in every verse. But he setteth him forth by the word; for otherwise he cannot be comprehended than by the word.

This was notably and lively represented by the brazen serpent, which is a figure of Christ. Moses commanded the Jews, which were stung of serpents in the desert, to do nothing else but steadfastly behold the brazen serpent, and not to turn away their eyes. They that did so, were healed only by that steadfast and constant beholding of the serpent (Numb. xxi. 6, 7, 8.). But contrariwise, they died which obeyed not the commandment of Moses, but looked upon their wounds, and not upon the serpent. So if I would find comfort when my conscience is afflicted, or when I am at the point of death, I must do nothing but apprehend Christ by faith, and say: I believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God, who suffered, was crucified, and died for me, &c. in whose wounds and in whose death I see my sin, and in his resurrection, victory over sin, death, and the devil; also righteousness and eternal life. Besides him, I see nothing, I hear nothing. This is true faith concerning Christ and in Christ. Whereby we are made

members of his body, flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bones. In him therefore we live, we move, and we have our being (Eph. v. 30. Acts xvii. 28.). Christ and our faith must thoroughly be joined together. We must be in heaven, and Christ must live and work in us. Now he liveth and worketh in us, not by speculation and naked knowledge, but in deed by a true and substantial presence.

Verse 29. *And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs by the promise.*

That is to say, If ye believe and be baptized into Christ, if ye believe, I say, that he is that promised seed of Abraham which brought the blessing to all the Gentiles, then are ye the children of Abraham, not by nature but by adoption. For the scripture attributeth unto him, not only the children of the flesh, but also of adoption and of the promise, and foresheweth that they shall receive the inheritance, and the other shall be cast out of the house. So Paul in few words translateth the whole glory of Libanus, that is to say, of the nations of the Jews unto the desert, that is unto the Gentiles. And this place comprehendeth a singular consolation, to wit, that the Gentiles are the children of Abraham, and consequently the people of God. But they are the children of Abraham, not by carnal generation, but by the promise. The kingdom of heaven then, life, and the eternal inheritance, belongeth to the Gentiles. And this the scripture signified long before, when it saith: I have made thee a father of many nations (Gen. xvii. 5.). Again: in thy seed shall all nations be blessed (Gen. xxii. 18.). Now therefore because we which are Gentiles do believe, and by faith do receive the blessing promised to Abraham, and exhibited by Christ, therefore the scripture calleth us the children and heirs of Abraham, not after the flesh, but after the promise. So that promise, In thy seed, &c. belongeth also to all the Gentiles, and according to this promise Christ is become ours.

Indeed the promise was made only to the Jews, and not to us that are Gentiles. (Psalm cxvii.) He sheweth his word unto Jacob, &c. He hath not dealt so with every nation, &c. Notwithstanding, that which was promised

cometh unto us by faith, by the which only we apprehend the promise of God. Albeit then that the promise be not made unto us, yet is it made as touching us and for us; for we are named in the promise; In thy seed shall all nations be blessed. For the promise sheweth plainly that Abraham should be the father, not only of the Jewish nation, but of many nations, and that he should be the heir, not of one kingdom, but of all the world (Rom. iv.). So the glory of the whole kingdom of Christ is translated unto us. Wherefore all laws are utterly abolished in the heart and conscience of a Christian: notwithstanding they remain without still in the flesh. And hereof we have spoken largely before.

CHAP. IV.

Verse 1. This I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all.

Verse 2. But is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the Father.

YE see with what vehement affection Paul goeth about to call back the Galatians, and what strong arguments he useth in debating the matter, gathering similitudes of experience, of the example of Abraham, of the testimonies of the scripture, and of the time, so that oftentimes he seemeth to renew the whole matter again. For before, he had in a manner finished the disputation concerning justification, concluding that a man is justified before God by faith only and alone. But because he calleth also to remembrance this political example of the little heir, he bringeth the same also for the confirmation of his matter. Thus trying every way, he lieth in wait with a certain holy subtilty to take the Galatians unawares. For the ignorant people are sooner persuaded with similitudes and examples, than with deep and subtil disputations. They will rather behold an image well painted, than a book well written. Paul therefore now, after that he had brought the similitude of a man's testament, of the prison, of the school-master, useth also this similitude of an heir (which is familiar and well known to all men), to move and to persuade them. And surely it is a very profitable thing to be furnished with similitudes and examples; which not only Paul, but also the prophets, and Christ himself also did often use.

Ye see, saith he, that it is ordained by the civil laws, that an heir, albeit he be the lord of all his father's goods, differeth not from a servant. Indeed he hath an assured hope of the inheritance; but before he come to his years, his tutors hold him in subjection, like as the school-master doth the scholar. They commit not unto him the ordering of his own goods, but constrain him to serve,

so that he is kept and maintained with his own goods like a servant. Therefore, so long as this bondage endureth, that is, so long as he is under tutors and governors, he differeth nothing from a servant. And this subjection and servitude is very profitable for him: for otherwise through folly he would soon waste all his goods. This captivity endureth not always, but hath a certain time limited and appointed by the father, wherein it must end.

Verse 3: *So also we, as long as we were children, were in bondage under the rudiments of the world.*

In like manner, when we were little children, we were heirs, having the promise of the inheritance to come, which should be given unto us by the seed of Abraham, that is to say, by Christ, in whom all nations should be blessed. But because the fulness of time was not yet come, Moses, our tutor, governor, and school-master, came holding us in captivity with our hands bound, so that we could bear no rule, nor possess our inheritance. In the mean time notwithstanding, like as an heir is nourished and maintained in hope of liberty to come: even so Moses did nourish us with the hope of the promise to be revealed in the time appointed, to wit, when Christ should come, who, by his coming, should put an end to the time of the law, and begin the time of grace.

Now the time of the law endeth two manner of ways: first (as I said), by the coming of Christ in the flesh at the time appointed of his Father. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, and made under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law, &c. (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) He entered into the holy sanctuary, once through his blood, and obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb. ix. 12.) Moreover, the same Christ, who came once in the time appointed, cometh also unto us daily and hourly in spirit. Indeed once with his own blood he redeemed and sanctified all; but because we are not yet perfectly pure (for the remnants of sin do yet cleave in our flesh, which striveth against the spirit. Heb. x. 14: Gal. v. 17.), therefore daily he cometh unto us spiritually, and continually more and more accomplisheth the appointed time of his Father, abrogating and abolishing the law.

So he came also in spirit to the fathers of the Old

Testament before he appeared in the flesh. They had Christ in spirit. They believed in Christ which should be revealed, as we believe in Christ which is now revealed, and were saved by him as we are, according to that saying: Jesus Christ is one yesterday, and to-day, and shall be the same for ever. Yesterday, before the time of his coming in the flesh. To-day, when he was revealed in the time before appointed. Now and for ever, he is one and the same Christ. For even by him only and alone all the faithful which either have been, be, or shall be, are delivered from the law, justified and saved.

In like manner; we also, saith he, when we were children, served under the rudiments of the world; that is to say, the law had dominion over us, oppressed us, and kept us in a strait bondage, as servants and captives. For first it restrained carnal and rebellious persons, that they should not run headlong into all kinds of vice. For the law threateneth punishment to transgressors, which if they feared not, there is no mischief which they would not commit: and over those whom the law so bridleth, it ruleth and reigneth. Again, it did accuse us, terrify us, kill us, and condemn us spiritually and before God; and this was the principal dominion that the law had over us. Therefore, like as an heir is subject unto his tutors, is beaten, and is compelled to obey their laws, and diligently to execute their commandments: even so, men's consciences, before Christ come, are oppressed with the sharp servitude of the law; that is to say, they are accused, terrified; and condemned of the law. But this dominion, or rather this tyranny of the law, is not continual, but must only endure until the time of grace. Wherefore the office of the law is to reprove and to increase sins, not to bring righteousness; to kill, not to bring life. For the law is a school-master unto Christ (Gal. iii. 20.) Like as therefore the tutors do handle the heir, being yet a child, straitly and hardly rule him and command him as a servant, and he again is constrained to be subject unto them: even so the law accuseth us, humbleth us, and bringeth us into bondage, that we may be the servants of sin, death, and of the wrath of God, which is indeed a most miserable kind of bondage. But as the power of the tutors, and the subjection and bondage of the little heir is not continual, but only endureth unto the time appointed of the father, which, being ended,

he needeth not to be governed by his tutors, nor remaineth under their subjection any more, but with liberty enjoyeth the inheritance: even so the law hath dominion over us, and we are constrained to be servants and captives under his government, but not for ever. For this clause which followeth must be added: Until the time appointed of the Father. For Christ, which was promised, came and redeemed us which were oppressed with the tyranny of the law.

Contrariwise, the coming of Christ profiteth not the careless hypocrites, the wicked contemners of God, nor the desperate, which think that nothing else remaineth but terrors of the law which they feel. His coming only profiteth those which are tormented and terrified with the law for a time; that is to say, such as despair not in those great and inward terrors which the law stirreth up, but with a sure trust come unto Christ the throne of grace, which hath redeemed them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them, and so obtain mercy and grace (Heb. iv. 16. Gal. iii. 13.).

There is a certain vehemency therefore in this word, We did serve. As if he would say, Our conscience was subject to the law, which holding us as bond-slaves and captives, like as a tyrant holdeth his prisoners, whipped us, and with all his power exercised his tyranny upon us; that is to say, it brought unto us a terror and an heaviness of spirit, it made us to tremble and ready to despair, threatening unto us everlasting death and damnation. This spiritual bondage and slavery of the law is most sharp and bitter, and yet (as I have said) it is not continual, but endureth so long as we are children; that is, as long as Christ is absent. Whilst he is absent, we are servants shut under the law, destitute of grace, faith, and all the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Verse 3. Under the elements or rudiments of the world.

Some have thought that Paul speaketh here of those corporal elements, the fire, the air, the water, and the earth. But Paul hath his peculiar manner of speech; and he speaketh here even of the law of God, which he calleth elements or rudiments of the world; and his words seem to be very heretical. So is he wont in other places also to diminish and to abase the authority of the law

very much when he calleth it the letter that killeth, the ministry of death and damnation, and the power of sin. And these most odious names, which shew plainly the power and use of the law, he chuseth of purpose to admonish us, that in the terrors of sin, wrath, and the judgment of God, we trust not to our own righteousness, or to the righteousness of the law, seeing that the law, in his principal use, can do nothing else but accuse our consciences, increase sin, threaten death and eternal damnation. Wherefore this diminishing and abasing of the law must be applied to the conflict of conscience, and not to the civil life, nor to secure and careless minds.

He calleth therefore the law the elements of the world; that is to say, the outward laws and traditions written in a certain book. For although the law do civilly bridle a man from evil, and constrain him to do well, yet notwithstanding being kept after this sort, it doth not deliver him from sin, it justifieth him not, it prepareth not a way for him to heaven, but leaveth him in the world. I do not obtain righteousness and everlasting life, because I kill not, I commit not adultery, I do not steal, &c. These outward virtues and honest conversation be not the kingdom of Christ, nor the heavenly righteousness, but the righteousness of the flesh and of the world; which also the Gentiles had, and not only the merit-mongers, as in the time of Christ the Pharisees, and in our time the monks and friars, &c. This righteousness some do observe to avoid the punishments of the law; some that they may be praised of men and esteemed righteous, constant, and patient, and therefore it is rather to be called coloured hypocrisy, than righteousness.

Moreover, the law, when it is in its principal use and office, can do nothing but accuse, terrify, condemn, and kill. But where such terror, such feeling of sin, of death; of the wrath and judgment of God is, there is no righteousness, no divine or heavenly thing, but all these are mere things of the world; which (because it is the kingdom of the devil) is nothing else but a certain puddle of sin, of death, of hell, and of all evils which the fearful, sorrowful, and heavy-hearted do feel; but the secure and careless contemners do not feel them. Wherefore the law, even in his best and most perfect use, doth nothing else but reveal and increase sin, and strike into us the

terror of death; and these are but worldly things. We see then that the law giveth no lively, no healthful, no divine or heavenly thing, but only worldly things. Wherefore Paul doth very fitly call the law the elements or rudiments of the world.

And although Paul call the whole law the rudiments of the world (as may appear by that I have said before), yet principally he speaketh thus in contempt of ceremonial laws: which, although they profit never so much, yet (saith he) they consist only in outward things, as meat, drink, apparel, places, times, the temple, the feasts, washings, the sacrifices, &c. which be but mere worldly, and things ordained of God only for the use of this present life, but not to justify or save before God. Therefore by this clause, the rudiments of the world, he rejecteth and condemneth the righteousness of the law, which consisteth in these outward ceremonies, being notwithstanding ordained and commanded of God to be observed for a time, and by a contemptible name calleth it the rudiments of the world. So the emperor's laws be rudiments of the world, for they intreat of worldly matters; that is to say, of things concerning this present life, as of goods, possessions, inheritances, murders, adulteries, robberies, &c. whereof speaketh also the second table of the commandments. As for the Pope's canon laws and decretals, which forbid marriage and meats, those Paul, in another place, calleth the doctrines of devils: which are also rudiments of the world, but that they do most wickedly bind men's consciences to the observation of outward things, contrary to the word of God and faith.

Wherefore the law of Moses giveth nothing but worldly things; that is to say, it doth not only shew civilly and spiritually the evils that be in the world. Notwithstanding, if it be in his true use, it driveth the conscience, by his terrors, to seek and thirst after the promise of God, and to look unto Christ. But that thou mayest do so, thou hast need of the aid and assistance of the Holy Ghost, which may say in thy heart: It is not the will of God, that after the law hath done his office in thee, thou shouldest only be terrified and killed; but that, when thou art brought by the law to the knowledge of thy misery and damnation, thou shouldest not despair, but believe in Christ, who is the end of the law to righteous-

ness, to every one that believeth. (Rom. x. 4.). Here is no worldly thing done: but here all worldly matters, and all laws cease, and heavenly things begin now to appear. Therefore, so long as we be under the rudiments of the world, that is to say, under the law, which giveth not only no righteousness and peace of conscience, but revealeth and increaseth sins, and engendereth wrath, we be servants thral and subject to the law, although we have the promise of the blessing to come. Indeed the law saith, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God: but that I may be able so to do, or to apprehend Christ, this cannot the law give.

I speak not this to the end that the law should be despised, neither doth Paul so mean, but it ought to be had in great estimation. But because Paul is here in the matter of justification, it was necessary that he should speak of the law as of a thing very contemptible and odious. For justification is a far other manner of thing than the law is. We cannot speak basely and contemptuously enough of the law when we are in this matter. When the conscience therefore is in the conflict, then should it think upon nothing, know nothing at all but Christ only and alone. Then should it remove the law utterly out of her sight, and embrace nothing but the promise concerning Christ. To say this it is an easy matter; but in the time of temptation, when the conscience wrestleth in the presence of God, to do it indeed, of all things it is the hardest; to wit, that when the law accuseth thee, terrifieth thee, revealeth unto thee thy sin, threateneth the wrath of God and eternal death, that then (I say) thou shouldest have such strength of faith in Christ, as if there had never been any law or any sin, but only Christ, mere grace, and redemption; or that thou shouldest be able to say, O Law, I will not hear thee, for thou hast a stammering and a slow tongue: moreover, the fulness of time is now come, and therefore I am free, and will not suffer thy tyranny any longer. Here a man may see how hard a matter it is to separate the law from grace. Again, how divine and heavenly a thing it is to hope here even against hope, and how true this proposition of Paul is, that we are justified by faith alone.

Learn here, therefore, to speak of the law as contemptuously as thou canst in the matter of justification, by the example of the apostle, which calleth the law the rudi-

ments of the world, pernicious traditions, the strength of sin, the ministry of death, &c. For if thou suffer the law to bear rule in thy conscience when thou standest before God wrestling against sin and death, then is the law indeed nothing else but a sink of all evils, heresies, and blasphemies; for it doth nothing but increase sin, accuse and terrify the conscience, threaten death, and set forth God as an angry judge which rejecteth and condemneth sinners. Here therefore, if thou be wise, banish this stuttering and stammering Moses far from thee with his law, and in any wise let not his terrors and his threatenings move thee. Here let him utterly be suspected unto thee as an heretic, as an excommunicate and condemned person, worse than the pope and the devil himself, and therefore not to be heard or obeyed in any case.

But, out of the matter of justification, we ought with Paul to think reverentially of the law, to commend it highly, to call it holy, righteous, good, spiritual, and divine (Rom. vii. 14.). Out of the case of conscience we should make a god of it, but in the case of conscience it is a very devil. For, in the least temptation that can be, it is not able to raise up and comfort the conscience; but it doth clean contrary: it terrifieth, it oppresseth with heaviness, and plucketh it from the assurance of righteousness, of life, and of all goodness. Hereupon Paul, a little after, calleth it weak and beggarly rudiments (Gal. iv. 9.). Wherefore, let us not suffer the law in any case to bear rule in our conscience, especially seeing it cost Christ so great a price to deliver the conscience from the tyranny of the law. For he was made a curse for us, that he might deliver us from the curse of the law. Let the godly learn therefore that the law and Christ are two contrary things, whereof the one cannot abide the other. For, when Christ is present, the law may in no case rule, but must depart out of the conscience, and leave the bed (which is so strait that it cannot hold two, as Isaiah saith, chap. xxviii. 20.) and give place only to Christ. Let him only reign in righteousness, in peace, in joy and life, that the conscience may sleep and repose itself joyfully in Christ without any feeling of the law, sin, and death.

Paul here of purpose useth this figurative speech, elements of the world; whereby (as I said) he doth much

abase and diminish the glory and authority of the law, to stir up our minds (2 Cor. iii.) For he that readeth Paul attentively, when he heareth that he calleth the law the ministry of death, the letter that killeth, &c. by-and-by he thinketh thus with himself: Why doth he give such odious, and, as it appeareth to reason, blasphemous terms to the law, which is a divine doctrine revealed from heaven? To this Paul answereth, that the law is both holy, just, and good, and that it is also the ministry of sin and death, but in divers respects. Before Christ, it is holy; after Christ, it is death. Therefore, when Christ is come, we ought to know nothing at all of the law, unless it be in this respect, that it hath power and dominion over the flesh, to bridle it and keep it under. Here is a conflict between the law and the flesh (to whom the yoke of the law is hard and grievous), as long as we live.

Only Paul, among all the apostles, calleth the law the rudiments of the world, weak and beggarly elements, the strength of sin, the letter that killeth, &c. (2 Cor. iii. 6.) The other apostles spake not so of the law. Whosoever then will be a right scholar in Christ's school, let him mark diligently this manner of speech used of the apostle: Christ calleth him an elect vessel, and therefore gave unto him an exquisite utterance, and a singular kind of speech above all the rest of the apostles, that he as an elect vessel might faithfully lay the foundations of the article of justification, and clearly set forth the same (Acts ix. 15.).

Verse 4. But after the fulness of time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, and made under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law.

That is to say, after that the time of the law was fulfilled, and that Christ was revealed, and had delivered us from the law, and that the promise was published among all nations, &c.

Mark here diligently how Paul defineth Christ. Christ (saith he) is the Son of God and of a woman, which for us sinners was made under the law, to redeem us that were under the law. In these words he comprehendeth both the person of Christ and the office of Christ. His person consisteth of his divine and human nature. This

he sheweth plainly when he saith, God sent his own Son born of a woman. Christ therefore is very God and very man. His office he setteth forth in these words: Being made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, &c.

And it seemeth that Paul here, as it were in reproach, calleth the Virgin Mary but only a woman; which thing was not well taken even of some of the ancient doctors, who would that he should rather have called her a virgin than a woman. But Paul intreateth in this epistle of the most high and principal matter of all, to wit, of the gospel, of faith, of Christian righteousness: also, what the person of Christ is, what is his office, what he hath taken upon him and done for our cause, and what benefits he hath brought to us wretched sinners. Wherefore the excellency of so high and so wonderful a matter was the cause that he had no regard to her virginity. It was enough for him to set forth and preach the inestimable mercy of God, which would that his Son should be born of that sex. Therefore he maketh no mention of the dignity of the sex, but of the sex only. And in that he nameth the sex, he signifieth that Christ was made true and very man of womankind. As if he said, he was born not of man and woman, but only of womankind. Therefore when he nameth but only the womankind, saying, made of a woman, it is as if he should have said, made of a virgin. John the Evangelist, when he thus setteth forth the word, that it was in the beginning, and was made flesh (John i. 1.), speaketh not one word of his mother.

Furthermore, this place also witnesseth that Christ, when the time of the law was accomplished, did abolish the same, and so brought liberty to those that were oppressed therewith, but made no new law after or besides that old law of Moses. Wherefore the monks and popish school-men do no less err and blaspheme Christ, in that they imagine that he hath given a new law besides the law of Moses, than do the Turks which vaunt of their Mahomet, as of a new lawgiver after Christ, and better than Christ. Christ then came not to abolish the whole law, that he might make a new, but (as Paul here saith) he was sent of his Father into the world, to redeem those which were kept in thralldom under the law. These words paint out Christ lively and truly: they do not attri-

bute unto him the office to make any new law, but to redeem them which were under the law. And Christ himself saith, I judge no man. And in another place, I come not to judge the world, but that the world should be saved by me (John viii. 15. xii. 47.); that is to say, I came not to bring any law, nor to judge men according to the same, as Moses and other lawgivers; but I have a higher and better office. The law killed you; and I again do judge, condemn, and kill the law; and so I deliver you from the tyranny thereof.

We that are old men, which have been so nursled up in this pernicious doctrine of the papists, that it hath taken deep root, even in our bones and marrow, have conceived an opinion quite contrary to that which Paul here teacheth. For although we confessed with our mouth that Christ redeemed us from the tyranny of the law, yet in very deed in our heart we thought him to be a lawgiver, a tyrant, and a judge, more terrible than Moses himself. And this perverse opinion we cannot yet at this day, in so great light of the truth, utterly reject; so strongly are those things rooted in our hearts which we learn in our youth. But ye which are yet young and are not infected with this pernicious opinion, may learn Christ purely with less difficulty than we that are old can remove out of our minds these blasphemous imaginations which we have conceived of him. Notwithstanding ye have not utterly escaped the deceits of the devil. For although ye be not yet infected with this cursed opinion that Christ is a lawgiver, yet have ye in you the root whereof it springeth; that is, ye have the flesh, reason, and the corruption of nature, which can judge no otherwise of Christ, but that he is a lawgiver. Therefore ye must endeavour with all your power to learn so to know and to apprehend Christ, as Paul has set him forth in this place. But if besides this natural corruption, there come also corrupt and wicked teachers (of whom the world is full), they will increase this corruption of nature, and so shall the evil be doubled; that is to say, evil instruction will increase and confirm the pernicious error of blind reason, which naturally judgeth Christ to be a lawgiver, and printeth that error mightily in our minds, that without great travail and difficulty it can never be abolished.

Wherefore it is very profitable for us to have always before our eyes this sweet and comfortable sentence, and

such like, which set out Christ truly and lively, that in our whole life, in all dangers, in the confession of our faith before tyrants, and in the hour of death, we may boldly and with sure confidence say: O law, thou hast no power over me, and therefore thou dost accuse and condemn me in vain. For I believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God, whom the Father sent into the world to redeem us miserable sinners oppressed with the tyranny of the law. He gave his life and shed his blood for me. Therefore, feeling thy terrors and threatenings, O law, I plunge my conscience in the wounds, blood, death, resurrection, and victory of my saviour Christ. Besides him I will see nothing, I will hear nothing. This faith is our victory, whereby we overcome the terrors of the law, sin, death, and all evils, and yet not without great conflicts. And here do the children of God, which are daily exercised with grievous temptations, wrestle and sweat indeed. For oftentimes it cometh into their minds, that Christ will accuse them, and plead against them; that he will require an account of their former life, and that he will condemn them. They cannot assure themselves that he is sent of his Father to redeem us from the tyranny and oppression of the law. And whereof cometh this? They have not yet fully put off the flesh, which rebelleth against the spirit. Therefore the terrors of the law, the fear of death, and such like sorrowful and heavy sights do oftentimes return, which hinder our faith, that it cannot apprehend the benefit of Christ (who hath redeemed us from the bondage of the law) with such assurance as it should do.

But how, or by what means hath Christ redeemed us? This was the manner of our redemption: He was made under the law. Christ, when he came, found us all captives under governors and tutors, that is to say, shut up and holden in prison under the law. What doth he then? Although he be lord of the law, and therefore the law hath no authority or power over him (for he is the Son of God), yet of his own accord he maketh himself subject to the law. Here the law executeth upon him all the jurisdiction it had over us. It accuseth and terrifieth us also: it maketh us subject to sin, death, the wrath of God, and with his sentence condemneth us. And this it doth by good right: For we are all sinners, and by na-

ture the children of wrath (Eph. ii. 3.). Contrariwise, Christ did no sin, neither was there any guilt found in his mouth (2 Pet. ii. 12.). Therefore he was not subject to the law. Yet notwithstanding the law was no less cruel against this innocent, righteous, and blessed lamb, than it was against us cursed and damned sinners, yea much more rigorous. For it accuseth him as a blasphemer and a seditious person: it made him guilty before God of the sins of the whole world: it so terrified and oppressed him with heaviness and anguish of spirit, that he sweat blood: and briefly, it condemned him to death, yea even to the death of the cross (Matt. xxvi. 65. Luke xxiii. 5. xxii. 44.).

This was indeed a wonderful combat, where the law, being a creature, giveth such an assault to his creator, and against all right and equity practiseth his whole tyranny upon the Son of God, which it exercised upon us the children of wrath. Now, therefore, because the law did so horribly and cursedly sin against his God, it is accursed and arraigned. There Christ saith: O law, thou mighty queen and cruel regent of all mankind, what have I done, that thou hast accused me, terrified me, and condemned me, which am innocent? Here the law, which had before condemned and killed all men, when it hath nothing wherewith to defend or purge itself, is again so condemned and vanquished, that it loseth his whole right, not only over Christ (whom it so cruelly handled and killed), but also over all them that believe in him. For to those Christ saith: Come unto me all ye that labour under the yoke of the law (Matt. xi. 28.) I could have overcome the law by my absolute power, without mine own smart; for I am Lord of the law, and therefore it hath no right over me. But I have made myself subject unto the law for your cause which were under the law, taking your flesh upon me; that is to say, of mine inestimable love I humbled and yielded myself to the same prison, tyranny, and bondage of the law, under the which ye served as captives and bond-slaves, I suffered the law to have dominion over me, which was his Lord, to terrify me, to make me thrall and captive unto sin, death, and the wrath of God, which it ought not to have done. Therefore I have vanquished the law, to have by double right and authority: first, as the Son of God and

Lord of the law; secondly, in your person; which is as much as if ye had overcome the law yourselves: for my victory is yours.

After this manner Paul speaketh every where of this marvellous combat between Christ and the law. And to make the matter more delectable and more apparent, he is wont to set forth the law, by a figure called *prosopopœia*, as a certain mighty person, which had condemned and killed Christ; whom Christ, again overcoming death, had conquered, condemned, and killed (Eph. ii.), killing enmity in himself. Again, 'Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, &c. (Psalm lxxviii.)' He useth the same figure also in his epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Colossians. By sin he condemned sin, &c. (Rom. viii. 3.) Christ therefore by this victory banished the law out of our conscience, so that now it can no more confound us in the sight of God, drive us to desperation; or condemn us. Indeed it ceaseth not still to reveal our sin, to accuse and terrify us: but the conscience taking hold of this word of the apostle, Christ hath redeemed us from the law, is raised up by faith, and conceiveth great comfort. Moreover, it triumpheth over the law with a certain holy pride, saying, I care not for thy terrors and threatenings; for thou hast crucified the Son of God, and this hast thou done most unjustly: therefore the sin that thou hast committed against him cannot be forgiven. Thou hast lost thy right and sovereignty, and now for ever thou art not only overcome, condemned, and slain unto Christ, but also to me believing in him, unto whom he hath freely given this victory. So the law is dead to us for ever, so that we abide in Christ. Thanks be therefore to God, which hath given us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. xv. 57.).

These things do also confirm this doctrine, that we are justified by faith only. For when this combat was fought betwixt Christ and the law, none of our works or deserts came between, but only Christ was found, who putting upon him our person, made himself subject to the law, and in perfect innocency suffered all tyranny. Therefore the law, as a thief and a cursed murderer of the Son of God, loseth all his right, and deserveth to be condemned in such sort, that wheresoever Christ is, or is once named, there it is compelled to avoid and fly away,

no otherwise than the devil (as the papists imagine) flieth from the cross. Wherefore if we believe, we are delivered from the law through Christ, who hath triumphed over it by himself (Col. ii. 15.). Therefore this glorious triumph purchased unto us by Christ, is not gotten by any works but only by faith: therefore faith only justifieth.

These words then, Christ was made under the law, &c. as they are pithy, and import a certain vehemency, so are they diligently to be weighed and considered. For they declare, that the Son of God, being made under the law, did not only perform one or two works of the law, that is to say, he was not only circumcised, or presented in the temple, or went up to Jerusalem with other at the times appointed, or only lived civilly under the law, but he suffered all the tyranny of the law. For the law being in his principal use and full of power, set upon Christ, and so horribly assailed him, that he felt such anguish and terror, as no man upon the earth had ever felt the like. This his bloody sweat doth sufficiently witness, his comfort ministred by the angel, that mighty prayer which he made in the garden, and briefly, that lamentable complaint upon the cross, O my God, why hast thou forsaken me? These things he suffered to redeem those that were under the law, that is to say, in heaviness of spirit, in anguish and terror, and ready to despair, which were oppressed with the heavy burden of their sins, as indeed we are all oppressed. For as touching the flesh we sin daily against all the commandments of God. But Paul giveth us good comfort when he saith, God sent his Son, &c.

So Christ, a divine and human person, begotten of God without beginning, and born of the virgin in the time appointed, came not to make a law, but to feel and suffer the terrors of the law with all extremity, and to overcome the same, that so he might utterly abolish the law. He was not made a teacher of the law, but an obedient disciple to the law, that by this his obedience he might redeem them which were under the law. This is against the doctrine of the papists, who have made Christ the law-giver, yea much more severe and rigorous than Moses. Paul teacheth here clean contrary, to wit, that God humbleth his Son under the law, that is to say, constrained him to bear the judgment and curse of the law,

sin, death, &c. For Moses, the minister of the law, sin, wrath, and death, apprehended, bound, condemned, and killed Christ: and all this he suffered. Therefore Christ standeth as a mere patient, and not as an agent, in respect of the law. He is not then a law-giver, or a judge after the law, but in that he made himself subject to the law, bearing the condemnation of the law, he delivered us from the curse thereof.

Now, whereas Christ in the gospel giveth commandments, and teacheth the law, or rather expoundeth it, this pertaineth not to the doctrine of justification, but of good works. Moreover, it is not the proper office of Christ (for the which he came principally into the world) to teach the law, but an accidental or by-office: like as it was to heal the weak, to raise up the dead, &c. These are indeed excellent and divine works; but yet not the very proper and principal works of Christ. For the prophets also taught the law, and wrought miracles. But Christ is God and man, who fighting against the law, suffered the utmost cruelty and tyranny thereof. And in that he suffered the tyranny of the law, he vanquished it in himself; and afterward being raised up again from death, he condemned and utterly abolished the law, which was our deadly enemy, so that it cannot condemn and kill the faithful any more. Wherefore the true and proper office of Christ is to wrestle with the law, with the sin and the death of the whole world, and so to wrestle that he must suffer and abide all these things; and by suffering them in himself, conquer and abolish them, and by this means deliver the faithful from the law and from all evils. Therefore to teach the law and to work miracles, are particular benefits of Christ, for the which he came not principally into the world. For the prophets, and especially the apostles, did greater miracles than Christ did (John xiv.).

Seeing then that Christ hath overcome the law in his own person, it followeth necessarily that he is naturally God. For there is none, whether he be man or angel, which is above the law, but only God. But Christ is above the law, for he hath vanquished it: therefore he is the Son of God, and naturally God. If thou lay hold upon Christ in such sort as Paul here painteth him out, thou canst not err nor be confounded. Moreover, thou shalt easily judge of all kinds of life, of the religions and

ceremonies of the whole world. But if this true picture of Christ be defaced, or in any wise darkened, then followeth a confusion of all things. For the natural man cannot judge of the law of God. Here faileth the cunning of the philosophers, of the canonists, and of all men. For the law hath power and dominion over man. Therefore the law judgeth man, and not man the law. Only the Christian hath a true and a certain judgment of the law. And how? That it doth not justify. Wherefore then is the law made, if it do not justify? Righteousness before God, which is received by faith alone, is not the final cause why the righteous do obey the law, but the peace of the world, thankfulness towards God, and good example of life, whereby other be provoked to believe the gospel. The Pope hath so confounded and mingled the ceremonial law, the moral law, and faith together, that he hath at length preferred the ceremonial law before the moral law, and the moral law before faith.

Verse 5. *That we might receive the adoption of the sons.*

Paul setteth forth and amplifieth very largely this place of Gen. xxii. In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. A little before he called this blessing of the seed of Abraham righteousness, life, the promise of the spirit, deliverance from the law, the testament, &c. Here he calleth it the adoption and inheritance of everlasting life. All these this word blessing doth comprehend. For when the curse (which is sin, death, &c.) is abolished, then, in the stead thereof, succeedeth the blessing, that is, righteousness, life, and all good things.

But by what merit have we received this blessing, that is to say, this adoption and inheritance of everlasting life? By none at all. For what can men deserve that are shut under sin, subject to the curse of the law, and worthy of everlasting death? We have then received this blessing freely, and being utterly unworthy thereof, but yet not without merit. What merit is that? Not ours; but the merit of Jesus Christ the Son of God, who being made under the law, not for himself, but for us (as Paul said afore, that he was made a curse for us), redeemed us which were under the law. Wherefore we have received this adoption by the only redemption of Jesus Christ the

Son of God, which is our rich and everlasting merit, whether it be of congruence or worthiness, going before grace or coming after. And with this free adoption we have also received the Holy Ghost, which God hath sent into our hearts crying Abba Father, as followeth:

Verse 6. *And because you are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts.*

The Holy Ghost is sent two manner of ways. In the primitive Church he was sent in a manifest and visible appearance. So he came upon Christ at Jordan in the likeness of a dove (Matt. iii. 16), and in the likeness of fire upon the apostles and other believers (Acts ii. 3.). And this was the first sending of the Holy Ghost; which was necessary in the primitive church: for it was expedient that it should be established by many miracles, because of the unbelievers, as Paul witnesseth—Strange tongues, saith he, be for a sign and a token, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not (1 Cor. xiv. 22.). But after that the church was gathered together and confirmed with those miracles, it was not necessary that this visibly sending of the Holy Ghost should continue any longer.

Secondly, the Holy Ghost is sent by the word into the hearts of the believers, as here it is said, God sent the spirit of his Son, &c. This sending is without any visible appearance; to wit, when by the hearing of the external word we receive an inward fervency and light, whereby we are changed and become new creatures; whereby also we receive a new judgment, a new feeling, and a new moving. This change and this new judgment is no work of reason, or of the power of man, but is the gift and operation of the Holy Ghost, which cometh with the word preached, which purifieth our hearts by faith, and bringeth forth in us spiritual motions. Therefore there is a great difference betwixt us and those which with force and subtilty persecute the doctrine of the gospel. For we by the grace of God can certainly judge by the word of the will of God towards us; also, of all laws and doctripes of our own life and of the life of others. Contrariwise, the papists and sectaries cannot certainly judge of any thing. For they corrupt, they persecute and blaspheme the word. Now without the

word a man can give no certain judgment of any thing.

And although it appear not before the world, that we be renewed in spirit, and have the Holy Ghost, yet notwithstanding our judgment, our speech, and our confession do declare sufficiently, that the Holy Ghost with his gifts is in us. For before we could judge rightly of nothing. We spake not as now we do. We confessed not that all our works were sin and damnable: that Christ was our only merit both before grace and after, as now we do in the true knowledge and light of the gospel. Wherefore let this trouble us nothing at all, that the world (whose works we testify to be evil) judgeth us to be most pernicious heretics and seditious persons, destroyers of religion, and troublers of the common peace, possessed of the devil, speaking in and governing all our actions. Against this perverse and wicked judgment of the world, let this testimony of our conscience be sufficient, whereby we assuredly know, that it is the gift of God, that we do not only believe in Jesus Christ, but that we also openly preach and confess him before the world. As we believe with our heart, so do we speak with our mouth, according to that saying of the Psalmist, I believed, and therefore I have spoken (Psalm cxvi. 10.).

Moreover we exercise ourselves in the fear of God, and avoid sin as much as we may. If we sin, we sin not of purpose, but of ignorance, and we are sorry for it. We may slip, for the devil lieth in wait for us both day and night. Also the remnants of sin cleave yet fast in our flesh: therefore, as touching the flesh we are sinners, yea after that we have received the Holy Ghost. And there is no great difference betwixt a Christian and a civil honest man. For the works of a Christian in outward shew are but base and simple. He doth his duty according to his vocation, he guideth his family, he tilleth the ground, he giveth counsel, he aideth and succoureth his neighbour. These works the carnal man doth not much esteem, but thinketh them to be common to all men, and such as the heathen may also do. For the world understandeth not the things which are of the spirit of God, and therefore it judgeth perversely of the works of the godly. But the monstrous superstition of hypocrites, and their will-works, they have in great ad-

miration. They count them holy works, and spare no charges in maintaining the same. Contrariwise, the works of the faithful (which although in outward appearance they seem to be but vile and nothing worth, yet are they good works indeed, and accepted of God because they are done in faith, with a cheerful heart, and with obedience and thankfulness towards God); these works, I say, they do not only acknowledge to be good works, but also they despise and condemn them as most wicked and abominable. The world therefore believeth nothing less than that we have the Holy Ghost. Notwithstanding, in the time of tribulation, or of the cross, and of the confession of our faith (which is the proper and principal work of those that believe), when we must either forsake wife, children, goods, and life, or else deny Christ, then it appeareth that we make confession of our faith, that we confess Christ and his word by the power of the Holy Ghost.

We ought not therefore to doubt whether the Holy Ghost dwelleth in us or not; but to be assuredly persuaded that we are the temple of the Holy Ghost, as Paul saith (1 Cor. iii. 16.). For if any man feel in himself a love towards the word of God, and willingly heareth, talketh, writeth, and thinketh of Christ, let that man know that this is not the work of man's will or reason, but the gift of the Holy Ghost; for it is impossible that these things should be done without the Holy Ghost. Contrariwise, where hatred and contempt of the word is, there the devil, the god of this world reigneth, blinding men's hearts, and holding them captive, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should not shine unto them (1 Cor. iv. 4.). Which thing we see at this day in the most part of the common people, which have no love to the word, but contemn it, as though it pertained nothing at all unto them. But whosoever do feel any love or desire to the word, let them acknowledge with thankfulness, that this affection is poured into them by the Holy Ghost. For we bring not this affection and desire with us; neither can we be taught by any laws how we may obtain it: but this change is plainly and simply the work of the right hand of the Most Highest. Therefore, when we willingly and gladly hear the word preached concerning Christ the Son of God, who for us was made man, and became subject to the law, to de-

liver us from the malediction of the law, hell, death, and damnation. Then let us assure ourselves that God, by and with this preaching, sendeth the Holy Ghost into our hearts. Wherefore it is very expedient for the godly to know that they have the Holy Ghost.

This I say to confute that pernicious doctrine of the papists, which taught that no man can certainly know (although his life be never so upright and blameless) whether he be in the favour of God or no. And this sentence, commonly received, was a special principle and article of faith in the whole papacy, whereby they utterly defaced the doctrine of faith, tormented men's consciences, banished Christ quite out of the church, darkened and denied all the benefits of the Holy Ghost, abolished the whole worship of God, set up idolatry, contempt of God, and blasphemy against God in men's hearts.

Augustine saith very well and godly, that "every man seeth most certainly his own faith, if he have faith." This do they deny. God forbid (say they) that I should assure myself that I am under grace, that I am holy, and that I have the Holy Ghost, yea although I live godly, and do all good works. Ye which are young, and are not infected with this pernicious opinion (whereupon the whole kingdom of the Pope is grounded), take heed and fly from it, as from a most horrible plague. We that are old men have been trained up in this error even from our youth, and have been so nursled therein, that it hath taken deep root in our hearts. Therefore it is to us no less labour to unlearn and forget the same, than to learn and lay hold upon true faith. But we must be assured and out of doubt that we are under grace, that we please God for Christ's sake, and that we have the Holy Ghost: For if any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same is none of his (Rom. viii. 9.).

Wherefore, whether thou be a minister of God's word, or a magistrate in the commonwealth, thou must assuredly think that thy office pleaseth God: but this canst thou never do, unless thou have the Holy Ghost. But thou wilt say, I doubt not but that my office pleaseth God, because it is God's ordinance: but I doubt of mine own person whether it please God or no. Here thou must resort to the word of God, which teacheth and assureth us, that not only the office of the person, but also the person itself pleaseth God. For the person is

baptized, believeth in Christ, is purged in his blood from all his sins, liveth in the communion and fellowship of his church. Moreover, he doth not only love the pure doctrine of the word, but also he is glad and greatly rejoiceth when he seeth it advanced, and the number of the faithful increased. Contrariwise, he detesteth the Pope and all sectaries with their wicked doctrine, according to that saying of the psalm: I hate them that imagine evil things, but thy law do I love (Psalm cxix. 113.).

We ought therefore to be surely persuaded, that not only our office, but our person pleaseth God: yea, whatsoever it saith, doth, or thinketh particularly, the same pleaseth God, not for our own sakes, but for Christ's sake, who was made under the law for us. Now we are sure that Christ pleaseth God, that he is holy, &c. Forasmuch then as Christ pleaseth God, and we are in him, we also please God and are holy. And although sin do still remain in our flesh, and we also daily fall and offend, yet grace is more abundant and stronger than sin. The mercy and truth of the Lord reigneth over us for ever. Wherefore sin cannot terrify us and make us doubtful of the grace of God, which is in us. For Christ, that most mighty giant, hath quite abolished the law, condemned sin, vanquished death and all evils. So long as he is at the right hand of God, making intercession for us, we cannot doubt of the grace and favour of God towards us.

Moreover, God hath also sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, as Paul here saith. But Christ is most certain in his spirit that he pleaseth God, &c.; therefore we also having the same spirit of Christ, must be assured that we are under grace for his sake which is most assured. This I have said concerning the inward testimony, whereby a Christian man's heart ought to be fully persuaded that he is under grace, and hath the Holy Ghost. Now, the outward signs (as before I have said) are, gladly to hear of Christ, to preach and teach Christ, to render thanks unto him, to praise him, to confess him, yea with the loss of goods and life; moreover, to do our duty according to our vocation, as we are able: to do it (I say) in faith, joy, &c. Not to delight in sin, nor to thrust ourselves into another man's vocation, but to attend upon our own, to help our needy brother, to com-

fort the heavy-hearted, &c. By these signs, as by certain effects and consequents, we are fully assured and confirmed, that we are in God's favour. The wicked also do imagine that they have the same signs, but they have nothing less. Hereby we may plainly see, that the Pope with his doctrine doth nothing else but trouble and torment men's consciences, and at length driveth them to desperation. For he not only teacheth, but also commandeth men to doubt. Therefore, as the Psalm saith, 'There is no truth or certainty in his mouth (Psalm v. 9.). And in another place: Under his tongue is iniquity and mischief (Psalm x. 7.).

Here we may see what great infirmity is yet in the faith of the godly. For if we could be fully persuaded that we are under grace, that our sins are forgiven, that we have the spirit of Christ, that we are the children of God: then doubtless we shall be joyful and thankful to God for this inestimable gift. But because we feel contrary motions, that is to say, fear, doubtfulness, anguish, and heaviness of heart, and such like, therefore we cannot assure ourselves hereof: yea our conscience judgeth it a great presumption and pride to challenge this glory. Wherefore, if we will understand this thing rightly and as we should do, we must put it in practice: for without experience and practice it can never be learned.

Wherefore let every man so practise with himself, that his conscience may be fully assured that he is under grace, and that his person and his works do please God. And if he feel in himself any wavering or doubting, let him exercise his faith and wrestle against this doubting, and let him labour to attain more strength and assurance of faith, so that he may be able to say: I know that I am accepted, and that I have the Holy Ghost; not for mine own worthiness, my work, my merit, but for Christ's sake, who of his inestimable love towards us made himself thral and subject to the law, and took away the sins of the world: in him do I believe. If I be a sinner and err, he is righteous and cannot err. Moreover, I gladly hear, read, sing, and write of him; and I desire nothing more than that his gospel may be known to the whole world, and that many may be converted unto him.

These things do plainly witness that the Holy Ghost is

present with us and in us. For such things are not wrought in the heart by man's strength, nor gotten by man's industry or travel, but are obtained by Christ alone, who first maketh us righteous by the knowledge of himself in his holy gospel, and afterwards he createth a new heart in us, bringeth forth good motions, and giveth unto us that assurance whereby we are persuaded that we please the Father for his sake. Also he giveth us a true judgment, whereby we prove and try those things which before we knew not, or else altogether despised. It behoveth us therefore to wrestle against this doubting, that we may daily overcome it more and more, and attain to a full persuasion and certainty of God's favour towards us; rooting out of our hearts this cursed opinion, that a man ought to doubt of the grace and favour of God, which hath infected the whole world.

Verse 6. *Crying, Abba Father.*

Paul might have said, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, calling Abba Father. He saith not so, but crying Abba Father, that he might shew and set forth the temptation of a Christian, which yet is but weak and weakly believeth. In the eighth to the Romans, he calleth this crying an unspeakable groaning. Likewise he saith, The spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not how to pray as we ought, but the spirit maketh intercession for us with unspeakable groanings, &c.

And this is a singular consolation when he saith, that the spirit of Christ is sent into our hearts, crying Abba Father: and again, that he helpeth our infirmities, making intercession for us with unspeakable groanings. He that could assuredly believe this, should never be overcome with any affliction were it never so great. But there are many things that hinder this faith in us. First, our heart is born in sin: moreover, this evil is naturally grafted in us, that we doubt of the good will of God towards us, and cannot assure ourselves that we please God, &c. Besides all this, the devil, our adversary, rangeth about with terrible roarings, and saith: Thou art a sinner; therefore God is angry with thee, and will destroy thee for ever. Against these horrible and intolerable roarings, we have nothing whereupon to hold and stay ourselves, but only the word, which setteth Christ before us as a

conqueror over sin and death, and over all evils. But to cleave fast to the word in this temptation and these terrors of conscience, herein standeth all the difficulty; for then Christ appeareth to no sense; we see him not; the heart feeleth not his presence or succour in temptation; but rather it seemeth that he is angry with us, and that he forsakes us. Moreover, when a man is tempted and afflicted, he feeleth the strength of sin and the infirmity of the flesh; he doubteth, he feeleth the fiery darts of the devil, the terrors of death, the anger and judgment of God. All these things cry out horribly against us, so that we see nothing else but desperation and eternal death. But yet in the midst of these terrors of the law, thundrings of sin, assaults of death, and roarings of the devil, the Holy Ghost (saith Paul) crieth in our hearts, Abba Father! And this cry surmounteth the horrible cries of the law, sin, death, the devil, &c.; it pierceth the clouds and the heavens, and ascendeth up into the ears of God.

Paul signifieth therefore by these words, that there is yet infirmity in the godly: as he doth also in the sixth chapter to the Romans, when he saith, The spirit helpeth our infirmities. Forasmuch, therefore, as the sense and feeling of the contrary is strong in us; that is to say, forasmuch as we feel more the displeasure of God, than his good will and favour towards us: therefore the Holy Ghost is sent into our hearts, which doth not only sigh and request for us, but mightily cryeth, Abba Father! and prayeth for us according to the will of God with tears and unspeakable groanings. And how is this done? When we are in terrors, and in the conflict of conscience, we take hold of Christ, and believe that he is our saviour; but then do the law and sin terrify and torment us most of all. Moreover, the devil assaileth us with all his engines and fiery darts, and goeth about with all his power to take away Christ and all consolations from us. Here we feel ourselves almost gone, and at the point of desperation: for then are we that bruised reed and smoking flax which Isaiah speaketh of, chap. xlii. 3. Notwithstanding, in the mean season, the Holy Ghost helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with unspeakable groanings (Rom. viii. 28.), and certifieth our spirits that we are the children of God. Thus is the mind raised up in terrors; it looketh unto his saviour and high bishop Jesus Christ; it overcometh the infirmity of

the flesh; it conceiveth comfort again, and saith, Abba Father. This groaning, which then we scantily feel, Paul calleth a crying and unspeakable groaning, which filleth both heaven and earth. Moreover he calleth it the crying and groaning of the spirit, because the Holy Ghost stirreth up the same in our hearts when we are weak and oppressed with temptation and terror.

Although then the law, sin, and the devil cry out against us never so much with great and terrible roarings, which seem to fill heaven and earth, and far to exceed this groaning of our heart, yet can they not hurt us. For the more fiercely they assail us, accuse and torment us with their cryings, so much the more do we groan; and in groaning lay hold upon Christ, call upon him with heart and mouth, cleave unto him, and believe that he was made under the law, that he might deliver us from the curse of the law, and destroy both sin and death. And thus, when we have taken hold of Christ by faith, we cry through him, Abba Father (Gal. iv. 6.). And this our cry doth far surmount the roaring of the law, sin, the devil, &c.

But so far off is it that we think this groaning, which we make in these terrors and this our weakness, to be a cry that scarcely we perceive it to be a groaning. For our faith, which in temptation thus groaneth unto Christ, is very weak, if we consider our own sense and feeling, and therefore we hear not this cry. We have but only the word, which when we apprehend in this conflict, we have a little breathing, and then we groan. Of this groaning some little feeling we have, but the cry we hear not. But he, saith Paul, which searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the meaning of the spirit, &c. (Rom. viii. 27.) To this searcher of the hearts, this small and feeble groaning (as it seemeth unto us) is a loud and a mighty cry, and an unspeakable groaning; in comparison whereof the great and horrible roarings of the law, of sin, of death, and of the devil, and of hell, are nothing; neither can they be once heard. Paul therefore, not without cause, calleth this groaning of a godly afflicted heart a cry and a groaning of the spirit which cannot be expressed; for it filleth heaven, so that the angels think they hear nothing else but this cry.

But in us there is a clean contrary feeling. For it seemeth unto us, that this our small groaning doth not so

pierce the clouds, that there is nothing else heard in heaven of God or his angels. Nay, we think, and especially during the time of temptation, that the devil horribly roareth against us, that the heavens thunder and the earth trembleth, that all will fall upon us, that all creatures threaten our destruction, that hell is open and ready to swallow us up. This feeling is in our heart; these horrible voices, and this fearful shew we hear and we see. And this is it that Paul saith in 2 Cor. xii. that the strength of Christ is made perfect through weakness. For then is Christ Almighty indeed; then doth he truly reign and triumph in us, when we are so weak that we can scarcely groan. But Paul saith, that this groaning is, in the ears of God, a most mighty cry, which filleth both heaven and earth.

Christ also, in the eighteenth of Luke, in the parable of the wicked judge, calleth this groaning of a faithful heart, a cry, yea, and such a cry as ceaseth not day and night to cry unto God, where he saith: Hear what the unrighteous judge saith. Now shall not God avenge his elect, which cry day and night unto him, yea though he suffer long for them? yea, I tell you he will avenge them quickly. We at this day, in so great persecution and contradiction of the Pope, of tyrants and sectaries, which fight against us both on the right hand and on the left, can do nothing else but utter such groanings. And these were our guns and artillery wherewith we have so many years scattered the counsels and enterprises of our adversaries; whereby also we have begun to overthrow the kingdom of Antichrist. They also shall provoke Christ to hasten the day of his glorious coming, wherein he shall abolish all rule, authority, and power, and shall put all his enemies under his feet. So be it.

In the fourteenth of Exodus, the Lord speaketh unto Moses at the Red Sea, saying, Why cryest thou unto me? Yet Moses cried not, but trembled and almost despaired, for he was in great trouble. It seemed that infidelity reigned in him, and not faith. For he saw the people of Israel so compassed and enclosed with the Egyptians host and with the sea, that there was no way whereby they might escape. Here Moses durst not once open his mouth. How then did he cry? We must not judge therefore according to the feeling of our own heart, but according to the word of God, which teacheth us that the Holy Ghost is given to those that are afflicted, terrified, and

ready to despair, to raise them up and to comfort them, that they be not overcome in their temptations and afflictions, but may overcome them, and yet not without great terrors and troubles.

The papists dreamed, "that holy men had the Holy Ghost in such sort that they never had nor felt any temptation." They spake of the Holy Ghost only by speculation and naked knowledge. But Paul saith, that the strength of Christ is made perfect through our weakness. Also, that the spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with unspeakable groanings. Therefore we have then most need of the help and comfort of the Holy Ghost; yea, and then is he most ready to help us, when we are most weak and nearest to desperation. If any man suffer affliction with a constant and a joyful heart, then hath the Holy Ghost done his office in him. And indeed he exerciseth his work specially and properly in those which have suffered great terrors and afflictions, and have, as the Psalm saith, approached nigh to the gates of hell. As I said of Moses, which saw present death in the waters, and on every side whithersoever he turned his face. He was therefore in extreme anguish and desperation; and (no doubt) he felt in his heart a mighty cry of the devil against him, saying, All this people shall this day perish, for they can escape no way; and of this great calamity thou only shalt be found to be the author, because thou hast led them out of Egypt. Besides all this, the people cried out against him, saying, Were there no graves in Egypt? Thou hast brought us out that we should die here in the wilderness. Had it not been better for us to have served the Egyptians, than here wretchedly to die in the wilderness? (Exod. xiv. 11.) The Holy Ghost was not here in Moses by bare speculation and knowledge only, but truly and effectually, who made intercession for him with unspeakable groaning, so that he sighed unto the Lord and said, O Lord, at thy commandment have I led forth this people; help us therefore. This groaning and sighing unto God the scripture calleth a crying.

This matter I have the more largely prosecuted, that I might plainly shew what the office of the Holy Ghost is, and when he specially exerciseth the same. In temptation, therefore, we must in no wise judge thereof according to our own sense and feeling, or by the crying of the law, sin, and the devil, &c. If we here follow our

own sense, and believe those cryings, we shall think ourselves to be destitute of all help and succour of the Holy Ghost, and utterly cast away from the presence of God. Nay rather let us then remember what Paul saith, The spirit helpeth our infirmities, &c. Also, it cryeth, Abba Father; that is to say, it uttereth a certain feeble sighing and groaning of the heart (as it seemeth unto us), which notwithstanding before God is a loud cry and an unspeakable groaning. Wherefore, in the midst of thy temptation and infirmity, cleave only unto Christ, and groan unto him: he giveth the Holy Ghost, which crieth, Abba Father. And this feeble groaning is a mighty cry in the ears of God, and so filleth heaven and earth, that God heareth nothing else: and moreover, it stoppeth the cries of all other things whatsoever.

Thou must mark also that Paul saith, that the spirit maketh intercession for us in our temptation: not with many words or long prayer, but only with a groaning, which notwithstanding cannot be expressed: and that he crieth not aloud with tears, saying, Have mercy on me, O God, &c. (Psalm li. 1.), but only uttereth a little sound and a feeble groaning, as Ah Father. This is but a little word, and yet notwithstanding it comprehendeth all things. The mouth speaketh not, but the affection of the heart speaketh after this manner: Although I be oppressed with anguish and terror on every side, and seem to be forsaken and utterly cast away from thy presence, yet am I thy child, and thou art my father for Christ's sake. I am beloved, because of the beloved. Wherefore, this little word Father, conceived effectually in the heart, passeth all the eloquence of Demosthenes, Cicero, and of the most eloquent rhetoricians that ever were in the world. This matter is not expressed with words, but with groanings; which groanings cannot be uttered with any words or eloquence, for no tongue can express them.

I have used many words to declare that a Christian must assure himself that he is in the favour of God, and that he hath the crying of the Holy Ghost in his heart. This have I done, that we may learn to reject and utterly to abandon that devilish opinion of the whole kingdom of the Pope, which taught that a man ought to be uncertain and to stand in doubt of the grace and favour of God towards him. If this opinion be received, then Christ profiteth nothing. For he that doubteth of God's favour

towards him, must needs doubt also of the promises of God, and so consequently of the will of God, and of the benefits of Christ, namely, that he was born, suffered, died, and rose again for us, &c. But there can be no greater blasphemy against God, than to deny his promises, to deny God himself, to deny Christ, &c. Wherefore it was not only an extreme madness, but an horrible impiety that the monks did so earnestly entice the youth, both men and women, to their monasteries, and to their holy orders (as they called them), as to a most certain state of salvation, and yet, when they had thus done, they bade them doubt of the grace and favour of God towards them.

Moreover, the Pope called all the world to the obedience of the holy church of Rome, as to an holy state, in the which they might undoubtedly attain salvation; and yet after he had brought them under the obedience of his laws, he commanded them to doubt of their salvation. So the kingdom of antichrist braggeth and vaunteth at the first of the holiness of his orders, his rules and his laws, and assuredly promiseth everlasting life to such as observe and keep them. But afterwards, when these miserable men have long afflicted their bodies with watching, fasting, and such like exercises, according to the traditions and ordinances of men, this is all that they gain thereby, that they are uncertain whether this obedience please God or no? Thus Satan most horribly dallied in the death and destruction of souls through the Pope: and therefore is the papacy a slaughter-house of consciences, and the very kingdom of the devil.

Now to establish and confirm this pernicious and cursed error, they alleged the saying of Solomon—The just and the wise men are in the hands of God; and yet no man knoweth whether he be worthy of love or of hatred (Eccles. ix. 1.). Some understand this of that which is to come, and some again of that which is present: but neither of them understand Solomon, who in that place meaneth nothing less than that which they dream. Moreover, the whole scripture teacheth us, especially and above all things, that we should not doubt, but assure ourselves and undoubtedly believe that God is merciful, loving, and patient; that he is neither a dissembler nor deceiver; but that he is faithful and true, and keepeth his promise; yea, and hath performed that he

promised, in delivering his only begotten son to death for our sins, that every one that believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. Here we cannot doubt but that God is pleased with us, that he loveth us indeed, that the hatred and wrath of God is taken away, seeing he suffered his Son to die for us wretched sinners. Although this matter be set out and often repeated throughout the whole gospel, yet it profiteth nothing at all. This one saying of Solomon, perversely understood, did more prevail (especially among the votaries and hypocrites of the straiter religion) than all the promises and consolations of the whole scripture, yea than Christ himself. They abused the scripture therefore to their own destruction, and were most justly punished for despising the scriptures, and rejecting the gospel.

It is expedient for us to know these things: first, because the papists vaunt of their holiness, as if they had never committed any evil. Therefore they must be convinced by their own abominations, wherewith they have filled the whole world, as their own books do witness, whereof there is yet an infinite number: secondly, that we may be fully certified that we have the pure doctrine of the gospel; of which certainty the Pope cannot glory, in whose kingdom, though all things else were sound and uncorrupt, yet this monstrous doctrine of doubting of God's grace and favour passeth all other monsters. And although it be manifest that the enemies of Christ's gospel teach uncertain things, because they command that men's consciences should remain in doubt, yet notwithstanding they condemn and kill us as heretics, because we dissent from them, and teach those things which are certain. And this they do with such devilish rage and cruelty, as if they were most assured of their doctrine.

Let us therefore give thanks unto God, that we are delivered from this monstrous doctrine of doubting, and can now assure ourselves that the Holy Ghost crieth and bringeth forth in our hearts unspeakable groanings: and this is our anchor-hold, and our foundation. The gospel commandeth us to behold, not our own good works, our own perfection: but God the promiser, and Christ the mediator. Contrariwise, the Pope commandeth us to look, not unto God the promiser, nor unto Christ our high bishop, but unto our works and merits. Here, on the one side, doubting and desperation must needs follow;

but on the other side assurance of God's favour and joy of the spirit. For we cleave unto God, who cannot lie. For he saith: Behold I deliver my son to death, that through his blood he may redeem thee from thy sins and from eternal death. In this case I cannot doubt, unless I will utterly deny God. And this is the reason that our doctrine is most sure and certain, because it carrieth us out of ourselves, that we should not lean to our own strength, our own conscience, our own feeling, our own person, and our own works; but to that which is without us, that is to say, the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive us. This the Pope knoweth not, and therefore he wickedly imagineth that no man knoweth, be he never so just or so wise, whether he be worthy of love or of hatred. But if he be just and wise, he knoweth assuredly that he is beloved of God, or else he is neither just nor wise.

Moreover, this sentence of Solomon speaketh nothing at all of the hatred or favour of God towards men, but it is a moral sentence reproving the ingratitude of men. For such is the perverseness and ingratitude of the world, that the better a man deserveth, the less thanks he shall have, and oftentimes he that should be his most friend, shall be his most enemy. Contrariwise, such as least deserve, shall be most esteemed. So David, a holy man and a good king, was cast out of his kingdom. The prophets, Christ, and his apostles were slain. To conclude, the histories of all nations witness, that many men, well deserving of their country, were cast into banishment by their own citizens, and there lived in great misery, and some also shamefully perished in prison. Wherefore Solomon in this place speaketh not of the conscience having to do with God, nor of the favour or judgment, the love or hatred of God; but of the judgments and affections of men among themselves. As though he would say, There are many just and wise men, by whom God worketh much good, and giveth peace and quietness unto men. But so far off are they from acknowledging the same, that oftentimes they requite them again most unkindly and uncourteously for their well-doings and deservings. Therefore, although a man do all things well, and never so well, yet he knoweth not whether by this his diligence and faithfulness he deserves the hatred or favour of men.

So we at this day, when we thought we should have found favour among our own countrymen, for that we preach unto them the gospel of peace, life, and eternal salvation, instead of favour, we have found bitter and cruel hatred. Indeed, at the first many were greatly delighted with our doctrine, and received it gladly. We thought they would have been our friends and brethren, and that with one consent together with us, they would have planted and preached this doctrine to others. But now we find that they are false brethren and our deadly enemies, which sow and spread abroad false doctrine; and that which we teach well and godly, they wickedly pervert and overthrow, stirring up offences in the churches. Whosoever therefore doth his duty godly and faithfully, in what kind of life soever he be, and for his well-doing receiveth nothing again but the unkindness and hatred of men, let him not vex and torment himself therefore, but let him say with Christ, They hated me without a cause. Again, For that they should have loved me, they slandered me; but I did pray (Psalm cix. 3, 4.).

The Pope therefore with this devilish doctrine, whereby he commanded men to doubt of the favour of God towards them, took away God and all his promises out of the church, buried all the benefits of Christ, and abolished the whole gospel. These inconveniences do necessarily follow; for men do not lean to the promises of God, but to their own works and merits. Therefore they cannot be assured of the good will of God towards them, but must needs doubt thereof, and so at length despair. No man can understand what God's will is, and what pleaseth him, but in his word. This word assureth us, that God hath cast away all the anger and displeasure which he had conceived against us, when he gave his only begotten Son for our sins, &c. Wherefore let us utterly abandon this devilish doubting, wherewith the whole papacy was poisoned, and let us be fully assured that God is merciful unto us, that we please him, that he hath a care over us, that we have the Holy Ghost, which maketh intercession for us with such crying and groaning as cannot be expressed.

Now this is the true crying and groaning indeed, when a man in temptation calleth upon God; not as a tyrant, not as an angry judge, not as a tor-

mentor, but as a father, although this groaning be so soft and so secret, that it can scarcely be perceived. For in serious temptations, and in the time of trial, where the conscience wrestleth with the judgment of God, it is wont to call God, not a father, but an unjust, an angry, a cruel tyrant and judge. And this crying, which Satan stirreth up in the heart, far passeth the cry of the spirit, and is strongly felt. For then it seemeth that God hath forsaken us, and will throw us down into hell. So the faithful complain oftentimes in the Psalms: I am cast from the presence of God (Psalm xxxi. 22.). Also, I am become as a broken vessel, &c. This is not the groaning that crieth Abba Father; but the roaring of God's wrath, which crieth srongly, O cruel judge, O cruel tormentor, &c. Here it is now time that thou turn away thine eyes from the law, from works, and from the sense and feeling of thine own conscience, and lay hold by faith of the promise; that is to say, of the word of grace and life, which raiseth up the conscience again, so that now it beginneth to groan and say: Although the law accuse me, sin and death terrify me never so much, yet, O my God, thou promisest grace, righteousness, and everlasting life, through Jesus Christ. And so the promise bringeth a sighing and a groaning, which crieth, Abba Father.

Verse 7. *Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a Son.*

This is the shutting up and the conclusion of that which he said before. As if he should say: This being true that we have received the spirit by the gospel, whereby we cry, Abba Father; then is this decree pronounced in heaven, that there is now no bondage any more, but mere liberty and adoption. And who bringeth this liberty? Verily this groaning. By what means? The Father offereth unto me by his promise, his grace, and his fatherly favour. This remaineth then, that I should receive this grace. And this is done when I again with this groaning do cry, and with a childly heart do assent unto this name father. Here then the father and the son meet, and the marriage is made up without all pomp and solemnity; that is to say, nothing at all cometh between, no law nor work is here required. For what should a man do in these terrors and horrible darkness of tempta-

tions? Here is nothing else but the father promising, and calling me his son by Christ, who was made under the law, &c. And I receiving and answering by this groaning, saying, Father. Here then is no exacting; nothing is required but only that childly groaning, that apprehendeth a sure hope and trust in tribulation, and saith: Thou promisest and callest me thy child for Christ's sake; and I again receive thy promise, and call thee father. This is indeed to be made children simply and without any works. But these things without experience and practice cannot be understood.

Paul in this place taketh this word servant otherwise than he did before in the third chapter, where he saith, 'There is neither bond nor free, &c.' Here he calleth him a servant of the law, which is subject to the law, as he did a little before: We were in bondage under the rudiments of the world. Wherefore to be a servant according to Paul in this place, is to be guilty and captive under the law, under the wrath of God and death, to behold God, not as a merciful father, but as a tormentor, an enemy, and a tyrant. This is indeed to be kept in bondage and Babylonical captivity, and to be cruelly tormented therein. For the law delivereth not from sin and death, but revealeth and increaseth sin, and engendereth wrath. This bondage (saith Paul, Rom. iii. 20. Rom. iv. 15.) continueth no longer; it oppresseth us not, nor maketh us heavy any more, &c. Paul saith, 'Thou shalt be no more a servant. But the sentence is more general, if we say, there shall be no bondage in Christ any more, but mere freedom and adoption. For when faith cometh, that bondage ceaseth, as he said before in the third chapter.

Now, if we by the spirit of Christ crying in our heart Abba Father, be no more servants but children, then it followeth that we are not only delivered from the Pope and all the abominations of men's traditions, but also from all the jurisdiction and power of the law of God. Wherefore we ought in no wise to suffer the law to reign in our conscience, and much less the Pope with his vain threatenings and terrors. Indeed he roareth mightily as a lion (Apoc. x.), and threateneth to all those that obey not his laws the wrath and indignation of Almighty God, and of his blessed apostles, &c. But here Paul armeth and comforteth us against these roarings, when he saith, 'Thou art no more a servant but a son. Take hold of

this consolation by faith, and say: O law, the tyranny can have no place in the throne where Christ my Lord sitteth: there I cannot hear thee (much less do I hear thee; O antichrist), for I am free and a son, who must not be subject to any bondage or servile law. Let not Moses therefore with his laws (much less the Pope) ascend up into the bride-chamber there to lie, that is to say, to reign in the conscience, which Christ hath delivered from the law, to the end that it should not be subject to any bondage. Let the servants abide with the ass in the valley: let none but Isaac ascend up into the mountain with his father Abraham (Gen. xii. 5.); that is, let the law have dominion over the body and over the old man: let him be under the law, and suffer the burden to be laid upon him: let him suffer himself to be exercised and vexed with the law; let the law limit and prescribe unto him what he ought to do, what he ought to suffer, and how he ought to live and govern himself among men. But let it not defile the bed in which Christ should rest and sleep alone; that is to say, let it not trouble the conscience. For she alone ought to live with Christ her spouse in the kingdom of liberty and adoption.

If then (saith he) by the spirit of Christ ye cry, Abba Father, then are ye indeed no longer servants, but free men and sons. Therefore ye are without the law, without sin, without death; that is to say, ye are saved, and ye are now quite delivered from all evils. Wherefore the adoption bringeth with it the eternal kingdom, and all the heavenly inheritance. Now, how inestimable the glory of this gift is, man's heart is not able to conceive, and much less to utter. In the mean time we see this but darkly, and as it were afar off: we have this little groaning and feeble faith, which only resteth upon the hearing and the sound of the voice of Christ in giving the promise. Therefore we must not measure this thing by reason or by our own feeling, but by the promise of God. Now because he is infinite, therefore his promise is also infinite, although it seem to be never so much inclosed in these narrow straits, these anguishes I mean. Wherefore there is nothing that can now accuse, terrify, or bind the conscience any more. For there is no more servitude, but adoption; which not only bringeth unto us liberty from the law, sin, and death, but also the inheritance of everlasting life, as followeth.

Verse 7. *Now, if thou be a son, thou art also the heir of God through Christ.*

For he that is a son, must be also an heir; for by his birth he is worthy to be an heir. There is no work or merit that bringeth to him the inheritance, but his birth only: and so in obtaining the inheritance he is a mere patient and not an agent; that is to say, not to beget, not to labour, not to care; but to be born is that which maketh him an heir. So we obtain eternal gifts, namely, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, the glory of the resurrection, and everlasting life, not as agents, but as patients, that is, not by doing, but by receiving. Nothing here cometh between, but faith alone apprehendeth the promise offered. Like as therefore a son in the politic and household government is made an heir by his only birth; so here faith only maketh us sons of God, born of the word, which is the womb of God, wherein we are conceived, carried, born, and nourished up, &c. By this birth then we are made new creatures, formed by faith in the word: we are made Christians, children and heirs of God through Jesus Christ. Now, being heirs we are delivered from death, sin, and the devil, and we have righteousness and eternal life.

But this far passeth all man's capacity, that he calleth us heirs, not of some rich and mighty prince, not of the emperor, not of the world; but of God the almighty creator of all things. This our inheritance then (as Paul saith in another place) is inestimable. And if a man could comprehend the great excellency of this matter, that he is the son and heir of God, and with a constant faith believe the same, this man would esteem all the power and riches of all the kingdoms of the world but as filthy dung in comparison of his eternal inheritance. He would abhor whatsoever is high and glorious in the world: yea the greater the pomp and glory of the world is, the more would he hate it. To conclude, whatsoever the world most highly esteemeth and magnifieth, that should be in his eyes most vile and abominable. For what is all the world, with all his power, riches, and glory, in comparison of God whose son and heir he is? Furthermore, he would heartily desire with Paul (Phil. i. 23.), to be loosed and to be with Christ, and nothing

could be more welcome unto him than speedy death, which he would embrace as a most joyful peace, knowing that it should be the end of all his miseries, and that through it he should attain to his inheritance, &c. Yea, a man that could perfectly believe this, should not long remain alive, but should be swallowed up incontinent with excessive joy.

But the law of the members striving against the law of the mind, hindereth faith in us, and suffereth it not to be perfect. Therefore we have need of the help and comfort of the Holy Ghost, which in our troubles and afflictions may make intercession for us with unspeakable groanings, as before I have said. Sin yet remaineth in the flesh, which oftentimes oppresseth the conscience, and so hindereth faith, that we cannot with joy perfectly behold and desire those eternal riches which God hath given unto us through Christ. Paul himself feeling this battle of the flesh against the spirit, crieth out: O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death (Rom. vii. 24.)? He accuseth his body, which notwithstanding it behoved him to love, calling it by an odious name, his death. As if he would say: My body doth more afflict me, and more grievously vex me than death itself: for it hindereth in him also this joy of spirit. He had not always the sweet and joyful cogitations of the heavenly inheritance to come, but he felt oftentimes also much heaviness of spirit, great anguish and terrors.

Hereby we may plainly see how hard a matter faith is; which is not easily and quickly apprehended, as certain full and loathing spirits dream, which swallow up at once all that is contained in the holy scriptures. The great infirmity which is in the saints, and the striving of the flesh against the spirit, do sufficiently witness how feeble faith is in them. For a perfect faith bringeth by-and-by a perfect contempt and loathing of this present life. If we could fully assure ourselves, and constantly believe that God is our father, and we his sons and heirs, then should we utterly condemn this world, with all the glory, righteousness, wisdom, and power, with all the royal sceptres and crowns, and with all the riches and pleasures thereof. We should not be so careful for this life: we should not be so addicted to the world and worldly things, trusting unto them when we have them, lamenting and despairing when we lose them: but we should do all

things with great love, humility, and patience. But we do the contrary; for the flesh is yet strong, but faith is feeble, and the spirit weak. Therefore Paul saith very well, that we have here in this life but only the first-fruits of the spirit, and that in the world to come we shall have the tenths also.

Verse 7. *Through Christ.*

Paul hath Christ always in his mouth: he cannot forget him. For he did well foresee that nothing should be less known in the world (yea among them which should profess themselves to be Christians) than Christ and his gospel. Therefore he talketh of him and setteth him before our eyes continually. And as often as he speaketh of grace, righteousness, the promise, adoption, and inheritance, he is always wont to add, In Christ, or through Christ, covertly impugning the Law. As if he would say, These things come unto us, neither by the law, nor by the works thereof: much less by our own strength, or by the works of men's traditions: but only by Christ.

Verse 8, 9. *But even then when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them, which by nature are no gods. But now seeing ye know God, yea rather are known of God, how turn you again to impotent and beggarly rudiments, whereunto, as from the beginning, ye will be in bondage again?*

This is the conclusion of Paul's disputation. From this place unto the end of the epistle he doth not much dispute, but only giveth precepts as touching manners. Notwithstanding he first reproveth the Galatians, being sore displeased that this divine and heavenly doctrine should be so suddenly and easily removed out of their hearts. As if he would say: Ye have teachers which will bring you back again into the bondage of the law. This did not I: but by my doctrine I called you out of darkness, and out of the ignorance of God, into a wonderful light and knowledge of him. I brought you out of bondage, and set you in the freedom of the sons of God, not by preaching unto you the works of the law, or the merits of men, but the grace and righteousness of God, and the giving of heavenly and eternal blessings.

through Christ. Now seeing this is true, why do ye so soon forsake the light and return to darkness? Why do ye suffer yourselves so easily to be brought from grace unto the law, from freedom to bondage?

Here again we see (as before I have said), that to fall in faith is an easy matter, as the example of the Galatians witnesseth. The example of the anabaptists, libertines, and such other heretics, witnesseth the same also at this day. We for our part do set forth the doctrine of faith with continual travel, by preaching, by reading, and by writing; we purely and plainly distinguish the gospel from the law, and yet do we little prevail. This cometh of the devil, who goeth about by all subtle means to seduce men and to hold them in error: he can abide nothing less than the true knowledge of grace and faith in Christ. Therefore, to the end he may take Christ clean out of sight, he setteth before them other shews, wherewith he so deceiveth them, that by little and little he leadeth them from faith and the knowledge of grace, to the disputation of the law. When he hath brought this about, then is Christ taken away. It is not without cause, therefore, that Paul speaketh so much and so often of Christ, and that he goeth about so purely to set forth the doctrine of faith; whereunto he attributeth righteousness only and alone, and taketh it from the law, declaring that the law hath a clean contrary effect; that is, to engender wrath, to increase sin, &c. For he would gladly persuade us, that we should not suffer Christ to be plucked out of our heart: that the spouse should not suffer her husband to depart out of her arms, but should always embrace him and cleave fast unto him, who being present, there is no danger; yea there is the faithful groaning, fatherly good will, adoption, and inheritance.

But why saith Paul that the Galatians turned back again to weak and beggarly rudiments or ceremonies, that is to say, to the law, whereas they never had the law; for they were gentiles (notwithstanding he wrote these things to the Jews also, as afterwards we will declare), or why speaketh he not rather after this manner? Once, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature were no gods; but now, seeing ye know God, why turn ye back again, forsaking the true God, to worship idols? Doth Paul take it to be all one thing, to fall from the promise to the law, from faith to works; and to

do service unto gods which by nature are no gods? I answer, Whosoever is fallen from the article of justification is ignorant of God, and an idolater. Therefore it is all one thing whether he afterwards turn again to the law, or to the worshipping of idols; it is all one whether he be called a Monk, a Turk, a Jew, or an Anabaptist. For when this article is taken away, there remaineth nothing else but error, hypocrisy, impiety, and idolatry, how much soever it seem in outward appearance to be the very truth, the true service of God, and true holiness, &c.

The reason is, because God will or can be known no otherwise than by Christ, according to that saying of John i. The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. He is the seed promised unto Abraham, in whom God hath established all his promises. Wherefore Christ is the only mean, and as ye would say, the glass by the which we see God; that is to say, we know his will. For in Christ we see that God is not a cruel exactor or a judge, but a most favourable, loving, and merciful Father, who to the end he might bless us, that is to say, deliver us from the law, sin, death, and all evils, and might endue us with grace, righteousness, and everlasting life, spared not his own Son, but gave him for us all, &c. (Rom. viii. 32.) This is a true knowledge of God, and a divine persuasion, which deceiveth us not, but painteth out God unto us lively.

He that is fallen from this knowledge, must needs conceive this fantasy in his heart: I will set up such a service of God: I will enter into such an order: I will chuse this or that work: and so I will serve God, and I doubt not but God will accept this, and reward me with everlasting life for the same. For he is merciful and liberal, giving all good things even to the unworthy and unthankful; much more will he give unto me grace and everlasting life for my great and manifold good deeds and merits. This is the highest wisdom, righteousness, and religion that reason can judge of; which is common to all nations, to the Papists, Jews, Turks, heretics. &c. They can go no higher than that Pharisee did, of whom mention is made in the gospel (Luke xviii. 11, 12.). They have no knowledge of the Christian righteousness, or of the righteousness of faith. For the natural man perceiveth not the mys-

teries of God (1 Cor. ii. 14.). Also: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God, &c. (Rom. iii. 11.). Therefore, there is no difference at all between a Papist, a Jew, a Turk, and an heretic. Indeed there is a difference of the person, the places, rights, religions, works, and worshippings; notwithstanding there is all one and the same reason, the same heart, opinion, and cogitation in them all. For the Turk thinketh the self-same thing that the Charter-house monk doth; namely, if I do this or that work, God will be merciful unto me: if I do it not, he will be angry. There is no mean betwixt man's working and the knowledge of Christ. If this knowledge be darkened or defaced, it is all one, whether thou be a monk, a Turk, a Jew, &c.

Wherefore, it is an extreme madness that the Papists and Turks do so strive among themselves about the religion and service of God, contending that both of them have the true religion and true worship of God. And the monks themselves agree not together. For one of them will be accounted more holy than another for certain foolish outward ceremonies, and yet in their hearts the opinion of them all is so alike, that one egg is not more alike to another. For this is the imagination of them all: If I do this work, God will have mercy upon me: if I do it not, he will be angry. And therefore, every man that revolteth from the knowledge of Christ, must needs fall into idolatry, and conceive such an imagination of God as is not agreeable to his nature: as the Charter-house monk for the observing of his rule, the Turk for the keeping of his Alcoran, hath this assurance, that he pleaseth God, and shall receive a reward of him for his labour.

Such a God, as after this sort forgiveth sins and justifieth sinners, can no where be found; and therefore this is but a vain imagination, a dream, and an idol of the heart. For God hath not promised that he will save and justify men for the religions, observations, ceremonies, and ordinances devised by men; yea, God abhorreth nothing more (as the whole scripture witnesseth) than such will-works, such service, rites, and ceremonies; for the which also he overthroweth whole kingdoms and empires. Therefore, as many as trust to their own strength and righteousness, do serve a god, but such a god as they themselves have devised, and not the true God indeed.

For the true God speaketh thus: No righteousness, wisdom, nor religion pleaseth me, but that only whereby the Father is glorified through the Son. Whosoever apprehendeth this Son, and me, and my promise in him by faith, to him I am a God; to him I am a father; him do I accept, justify, and save. All other abide under wrath, because they worship that thing which by nature is no God.

Whosoever forsaketh this doctrine, must needs fall into the ignorance of God; he understandeth not what the true Christian righteousness, wisdom, and service of God is: he is an idolater abiding under the law, sin, death, and the power of the devil, and all things that he doth are accursed and condemned. Therefore the anabaptist, imagining with himself that he pleaseth God if he be re-baptized; if he forsake his house, wife, and children; if he mortify his flesh, and suffer much adversity, and at length death itself, yet there is not one drop of the knowledge of Christ in him, but secluding Christ, he dreameth altogether of his own works, of the forsaking of his goods, of his affliction and mortification, and now differeth nothing from the Turk, Jew, or Papist, in spirit or in heart, but only in the outward appearance, works, and ceremonies which he hath chosen to himself. The same confidence in works have all the monks and other religious orders; notwithstanding in their apparel and other outward things there is a difference.

There are at this day very many like unto these, which notwithstanding would be counted among the true professors and teachers of the gospel, and as touching the words, they teach that men are delivered from their sins by the death of Christ. But because they teach faith in such sort, that they attribute more to charity than to faith, they highly dishonour Christ, and wickedly pervert his word. For they dream that God regardeth and accepteth us for our charity sake, whereby we being reconciled to God, do love God and our neighbour. If this be true, then have we no need of Christ at all. Such men serve not the true God, but an idol of their own heart, which they themselves have devised. For the true God doth not regard or accept us for our charity, virtues, or newness of life, but for Christ's sake, &c.

But they make this objection: Yet notwithstanding the scripture commandeth that we should love God with all our heart, &c. It is true. But it followeth not, that

because God commandeth us, therefore we do it. If we did love God with all our heart, &c. then no doubt we should be justified, and live through this obedience, as it is written: He that shall do these things shall live in them (Lev. xviii. 5. Rom. x. 3.) But the gospel saith, Thou dost not these things: therefore thou shalt not live in them. For this sentence, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c. requireth a perfect obedience, a perfect fear, trust and love towards God. These things men neither do nor can perform in this corrupt nature. Therefore this law, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c. justifieth not, but accuseth and condemneth all men, according to that saying: The law causeth wrath, &c. Contrariwise, Christ is the finishing and accomplishing of the law to righteousness, to every one that believeth (Rom. iv. 15. Rom. x. iv.). Of this we have spoken largely before.

In like manner the Jew keeping the law with this opinion, that he by this obedience will please God, serveth not the true God: but is an idolater, worshipping a dream and an idol of his own heart, which is nowhere to be found. For the God of his fathers, whom he saith he worshippeth, promised to Abraham a seed, through the which all nations should be blessed. Therefore God is known and the blessing is given, not by the law but by the gospel of Christ. Although Paul spake these words: Then when ye knew not God, ye did service, &c. properly and principally to the Galatians, which were gentiles; yet notwithstanding by the same words he also toucheth the Jews, who, though they had rejected their idols outwardly, yet in their hearts they worshipped them more than did the gentiles, as is said (Rom. ii.): Thou abhorrest idols, and committest sacrilege. The gentiles were not the people of God,; they had not his word, and therefore their idolatry was gross. But the idolatrous Jews cloaked their idolatry with the name and word of God (as all justiciaries which seek righteousness by works are wont to do), and so with this outward shew of holiness they deceived many. Therefore idolatry, the more holy and spiritual it is, the more hurtful it is.

But how may these two contrary sayings which the apostle here setteth down be reconciled together? Ye knew not God, and ye worshipped God. I answer: All men naturally have this general knowledge, that there is

a God, according to that saying (Rom. i.), Forasmuch as that which may be known of God was manifest in them. For God was manifest unto them, in that the invisible things of him did appear by the creation of the world. Moreover, the ceremonies and religions which were, and always remained among all nations, sufficiently witness that all men have had a certain general knowledge of God. But whether they had it by nature, or by the tradition of their forefathers, I will not here dispute.

But here some will object again: If all men knew God, wherefore then doth Paul say, that the Galatians knew not God before the preaching of the gospel? I answer, There is a double knowledge of God, general and particular. All men have the general knowledge, namely, that there is a God, that he created heaven and earth, that he is just, that he punisheth the wicked. But what God thinketh of us, what his will is toward us, what he will give, or what he will do to the end we may be delivered from sin and death, and be saved (which is the true knowledge of God indeed), this they know not. As it may be that I know some man by sight, whom yet indeed I know not thoroughly, because I understand not what affection he beareth towards me. So men know naturally that there is a God, but what his will is, or what is not his will, they do not know. For it is written, There is none that understandeth God (Rom. iii. 11.). And in another place, No man hath seen God (John i. 18.). That is to say, no man hath known what is the will of God. Now, what doth it avail thee if thou know that there is a God, and yet art ignorant what is his will towards thee. Here some think one thing, and some another. The Jews imagine this to be the will of God, if they worship him according to the rule of Moses' law; the Turk, if he observes his Alcoran; the monk, if he keep his order and perform his vows. But all these are deceived, and become vain in their own cogitations, as Paul saith (Rom. i.) not knowing what pleaseth or displeaseth God. Therefore, instead of the true and natural God, they worship the dreams and imaginations of their own heart.

This is it that Paul meaneth when he saith, When ye knew not God; that is, when ye knew not the will of God, ye served those which by nature were no gods; that is to say, ye served the dreams and imaginations of your

own heart, whereby ye imagined without the word, that God was to be worshipped with this or that work, with this or that rite or ceremony. For upon this proposition, which all men do naturally hold, namely, that there is a God, hath sprung all idolatry, which, without the knowledge of the divinity, could never have come into the world. But because men had this natural knowledge of God, they conceived vain and wicked imaginations of God, without and against the word, which they esteemed and maintained as the very truth itself, and so dreamed that God is such a one, as by nature he is not. So the monk imagineth him to be such a God as forgiveth sins, giveth grace and everlasting life for the keeping of his rule. This God is no where to be found. Therefore he serveth not the true God, but that which by nature is no god; to wit, the imagination and idol of his own heart; that is to say, his own false and vain opinion of God, which he dreameth to be an undoubted truth. Now reason itself will enforce us to confess, that man's opinion is no god. Therefore, whosoever will worship God without his word, serveth not the true God (as Paul saith), but that which by nature is no God.

Therefore, whether ye call rudiments here the law of Moses, or else the traditions of the gentiles (albeit he speaketh here properly and principally of the rudiments of Moses), there is no great difference. For he that falleth from grace to the law, falleth with no less danger than he that falleth from grace to idolatry. For without Christ there is nothing else but mere idolatry, an idol and false imagination of God, whether it be called Moses' law, or the Pope's ordinances, or the Turk's Alcoran, &c. Therefore he saith with a certain admiration,

Verse 9. *But now seeing you know God.*

As though he should say, This is a marvellous thing, that ye, knowing God by the preaching of faith, do so suddenly revolt from the true knowledge of his will (wherein I thought ye were so surely established, that I feared nothing less than that ye should be so easily overthrown); and do now again, by the instigation of the false apostles, return to the weak and beggarly ceremonies which ye would serve again afresh. Ye heard before, by my

preaching, that this is the will of God to bless all nations; not by circumcision, or by the observation of the law, but by Christ promised to Abraham (Gal. iii. 9.). They that believe in him, shall be blessed with faithful Abraham (Gal. iv. 7.). They are the sons and heirs of God. Thus (I say) have ye known God.

Verse 9. *Yea, rather are known of God, &c.*

He correcteth the sentence going before, but now seeing ye have known God: or rather turneth it after this manner, yea rather ye are known of God. For he feared lest they had lost God utterly. As if he would say: Alas! are ye come to this point, that now ye know not God, but return again from grace to the law? Yet notwithstanding God knoweth you. And indeed our knowledge is rather passive than active: that is to say, it consisteth in this, that we are rather known of God, than that we know him. All our doing, that is, all our endeavour to know and to apprehend God, is to suffer God to work in us. He giveth the word, which when we have received by faith given from above, we are new-born and made the sons of God. This is then the sense and meaning: Ye are known of God: that is, ye are visited with the word, ye are endued with faith and the Holy Ghost, whereby ye are renewed, &c. Wherefore, even by these words, ye are known of God, he taketh away all righteousness from the law, and denieth that we attain the knowledge of God through the worthiness of our own works. For no man knoweth the Father, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him (Luke x. 22.). Also, He, by his knowledge, shall justify many, because he shall bear their iniquities (Isaiah liii. 11.). Wherefore, our knowledge concerning God consisteth in suffering, and not in doing.

He much marvelleth, therefore, that, seeing they knew God truly by the gospel, they returned so suddenly to weak and beggarly rudiments, by the persuasion of the false apostles. As I myself also should greatly marvel, if our church (which by the grace of God is godly reformed in pure doctrine and faith) should be seduced and perverted by some fond and frantic head, through the preaching of one or two sermons, that they would not acknowledge me for their pastor any more. Which thing

notwithstanding shall one day come to pass, if not whilst we live, yet when we are dead and gone. For many shall then rise up, which will be masters and teachers; who, under a colour of true religion, shall teach false and perverse doctrine, and shall quickly overthrow all that we in so long time and with so great travail have builded. We are not better than the apostles, who, whilst they yet lived, saw (not without their great grief and sorrow) the subversion of those churches which they themselves had planted through their ministry. Therefore it is no great marvel, if we be constrained to behold the like evil at this day in those churches, where sectaries do reign, who hereafter, when we are dead, shall possess those churches which we have won and planted by our ministry, and with their poison infect and subvert the same. And yet notwithstanding Christ shall remain and reign to the end of the world, and that marvellously, as he did under the papacy.

Paul seemeth to speak very spitefully of the law, when he calleth it the rudiments (as he did also before in the beginning of this chapter) and not only rudiments, but weak and beggarly rudiments and ceremonies. Is it blasphemy to give such odious names to the law of God? The law being in his true use, ought to serve the promises, and to stand with the promises and grace. But, if it fight against them, it is no more the holy law of God, but a false and a devilish doctrine, and doth nothing else but drive men to desperation, and therefore must be rejected.

Wherefore, when he calleth the law weak and beggarly rudiments, he speaketh of the law in respect of proud and presumptuous hypocrites, which would be justified by it, and not of the law being spiritually understood, which engendereth wrath (Rom. iv. 15.). For the law (as I have often said) being in his own proper use, accuseth and condemneth a man; and in this respect it is not only a strong and a rich rudiment, but most mighty and most rich, yea rather an invincible power and riches: and if here the conscience be compared with the law, then it is most weak and beggarly. For it is so tender a thing, that for a small sin it is so troubled and terrified, that it utterly despaireth, unless it be raised up again. Wherefore, the law, in his proper use, hath more strength and riches than heaven and earth is able to contain; insomuch

that one letter or one tittle of the law is able to kill all mankind, as the history of the law given by Moses doth witness (Exod. xix. 20.). This is the true and divine use of the law, of which Paul speaketh not in this place.

Paul therefore intreateth here of hypocrites, which are fallen from grace, or which have not yet attained to grace. These, abusing the law, seek to be justified by it. They exercise and tire themselves day and night in the works thereof, as Paul witnesseth of the Jews—For I bear them record, saith he, that they have the zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; for they, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, &c. (Rom. x.) Such do hope so to be strengthened and enriched by the law, that they may be able to set their power and riches, which they have gotten by the righteousness thereof, against the wrath and judgment of God, and so to appease God, and to be saved thereby. In this respect then we may well say, that the law is a weak and a beggarly rudiment, that is to say, which can give neither help nor counsel.

And whoso listeth to amplify this matter, may further say, that the law is a weak and a beggarly rudiment, because it maketh men more weak and beggarly: again, because that of itself it hath no power, or riches, whereby it is able to give or to bring righteousness: and moreover, that it is not only weak and beggarly, but even weakness and beggary itself. How then shall it enrich or strengthen those, which were before both weak and beggarly? Therefore to seek to be justified by the law, is as much as if a man, being weak and feeble already, would seek some other greater evil, whereby he might overcome his weakness and poverty, which notwithstanding would bring unto him utter destruction. As if he which hath the falling sickness would seek to join unto it the pestilence for a remedy; or if a leper should come to a leper, or a beggar to a beggar; the one to help and to enrich the other.

Paul therefore sheweth, that they which seek to be justified by the law have this commodity thereby, that daily they become more and more weak and beggarly. For they be weak and beggarly of themselves; that is to say, they are by nature the children of wrath, subject to death and everlasting damnation, and yet they lay hold upon that which is nothing else but mere weakness and beggary, seeking to be strengthened and enriched thereby.

Therefore, every one that falleth from the promise to the law, from faith to works, doth nothing else but lay upon himself such a burden, being weak and feeble already, as he is not able to bear (Acts xv.), and in bearing thereof is made ten times more weak, so that at length he is driven to despair, unless Christ come and deliver him.

This thing the gospel also witnesseth, speaking of the woman which was grieved twelve years with a bloody issue, and suffered many things of many physicians, upon whom she had spent all her substance, and yet could not be cured; but the longer she was under their hands, the worse she was (Luke v. 45.) As many, therefore, as do the works of the law to be justified thereby, are not only not made righteous, but twice more unrighteous than they were before; that is (as I have said) more weak and beggarly, and more unapt to do any good work. This have I proved to be true both in myself and in many others. I have known many monks in the papacy, which with great zeal have done many great works for the attaining of righteousness and salvation, and yet were they more impatient, more weak, more miserable, more faithless, more fearful, and more ready to despair than any other. The civil magistrates, who were ever occupied in great and weighty affairs, were not so impatient, so fearful, so faint-hearted, so superstitious and so faithless as these justiciaries and merit-mongers were.

Whosoever then seeketh righteousness by the law, what can he imagine else, but that God, being angry, must needs be pacified with works? Now when he hath once conceived this fantasy, he beginneth to work. But he can never find so many good works as are able to quiet his conscience, but still he desireth more; yea he findeth sins in those works he hath done already. Therefore his conscience can never be certified, but must needs be always in doubt, and thus think with itself: Thou hast not sacrificed as thou shouldest do; thou hast not prayed aright; this thou hast left undone; this or that sin thou hast committed. Here the heart trembleth and feeleth itself oppressed with innumerable sins, which still increase without end, so that he swerveth from righteousness more and more, until at length he fall to desperation. Hereof it cometh, that many, being at the point of death, have uttered these desperate words: O wretch that I am! I have not kept mine order! Whither shall I flee from the

wrath of Christ, that angry judge! Would to God I had been made a swineherd, or the vilest wretch in the whole world.

Thus the monk, in the end of his life, is more weak, more beggarly, more faithless and fearful than he was at the beginning, when he first entered into his order. The reason is, because he would strengthen himself through weakness, and enrich himself through poverty. The law, or men's traditions, or the rule of his order, should have healed him when he was sick, and enriched him when he was poor: but he is become more feeble and more poor than the publicans and harlots. The publicans and harlots have not an heap of good works to trust unto, as the monks have: but although they feel their sins never so much, yet they can say with the publican, O Lord, be merciful to me a sinner! (Luke xviii. 13.) But contrariwise, the monk, which hath spent all his time in weak and beggarly elements, is confirmed in this opinion: If thou keep thy rule, thou shalt be saved, &c. With this false persuasion he is so deluded and bewitched, that he cannot apprehend grace, nor once remember grace. Thus, notwithstanding all the works which either he doth or hath done, be they never so many and so great, he thinketh that he hath never done enough, but hath still an eye to more works; and so by heaping up of works, he goeth about to appease the wrath of God, and to justify himself, until he be driven to utter desperation. Wherefore, whosoever falleth from faith, and followeth the law, is like to Aesop's dog, which foregoeth the flesh, and snatcheth at the shadow. Wherefore, it is impossible that such as seek righteousness and salvation by the law (whereunto men are naturally inclined) should ever find quietness and peace of conscience: yea they do nothing else but heap laws upon laws, whereby they torment both themselves and others, and afflict men's consciences so miserably, that, through extreme anguish of heart, many die before their time. For one law always bringeth forth ten more, and so they increase without number and without end.

Now, who would have thought that the Galatians, which had learned so sound and so pure a doctrine of such an excellent apostle and teacher, could be so suddenly led away from the same, and utterly perverted by the false apostles? It is not without cause that I repeat this so

often, that to fall away from the truth of the gospel is an easy matter. The reason is, because men do not sufficiently consider, no not the very faithful, what an excellent and a precious treasure the true knowledge of Christ is. Therefore they do not labour so diligently and so carefully as they should do, to obtain and to retain the same. Moreover, the greater part of those that hear the word are exercised with no cross or affliction; they wrestle not against sin, death, and the devil, but live in security without any conflict. Such men, because they are not proved and tried with temptations, and therefore are not armed with the word of God against the subtilties of the devil, never feel the use and power of the word. Indeed, whilst they are among faithful ministers and preachers, they can follow their words, and say as they say, persuading themselves that they perfectly understand the matter of justification. But when they are gone, and wolves in sheep's clothing are come in their place, it happeneth unto them as it did to the Galatians; that is to say, they are suddenly seduced and easily turned back to weak and beggarly rudiments.

Paul hath here his peculiar manner of speech, which the other apostles did not use. For there was none of them besides Paul that gave such names to the law; to wit, that it is a weak and a beggarly rudiment, that is to say, utterly unprofitable to righteousness. And surely I durst not have given such terms unto the law, but should have thought it great blasphemy against God, if Paul had not done so before. But of this I have intreated more largely before, where I shewed when the law is weak and beggarly, and when it is most strong and rich, &c. Now if the law of God be weak and unprofitable to justification, much more are the laws and decrees of the Pope weak and unprofitable to justification. Therefore we give sentence against the ordinances, laws, and decrees of the Pope, with such boldness and assurance as Paul did against the law of God, that they are not only weak and beggarly rudiments, and utterly unprofitable to righteousness, but also execrable, accursed, devilish, and damnable: for they blaspheme grace, they overthrow the gospel, abolish faith, take away Christ, &c.

Forasmuch then as the Pope requireth that we should keep his laws as necessary to salvation, he is very anti-christ and the vicar of Satan; and as many as cleave unto

him, and confirm his abominations and blasphemies, or keep them to this end, that thereby they may merit the forgiveness of their sins, are the servants of antichrist and of the devil. Now such hath the doctrine of the papistical church been of a long time, that these laws ought to be kept as necessary to salvation. Thus the Pope sitteth in the temple of God, vaunting himself as God: he setteth himself against God, and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or worshipped, &c. and men's consciences more feared and revered the laws and ordinances of the Pope, than the word of God and his ordinances. By this means he was made the lord of heaven and earth, and of hell, and bare a triple crown upon his head. The cardinals also and bishops, his creatures, were made kings and princes of the world: and therefore, if he did not burden men's consciences with his laws, he could not long maintain his terrible power, his dignity, and his riches; but his whole kingdom would quickly fall.

This place, which Paul here handleth, is weighty and of great importance, and therefore the more diligently to be marked; to wit, that they which fall from grace to the law do utterly lose the knowledge of the truth; they see not their own sins; they neither know God, nor the devil, nor themselves; and moreover, they understand not the force and use of the law, although they brag never so much that they keep and observe the same. For without the knowledge of grace, that is to say, without the gospel of Christ, it is impossible for a man to give his definition of the law, that it is a weak and a beggarly rudiment, and unprofitable to righteousness. But he rather judgeth quite contrary of the law; to wit, that it is not only necessary to salvation, but also that it strengtheneth such as are weak, and enricheth such as are poor and beggarly; that is to say, that such as obey and observe the same, shall be able to merit righteousness and everlasting salvation. If this opinion remain, the promise of God is denied, Christ is taken away, lying, impiety, and idolatry is established. Now the Pope, with all his bishops, his schools, and whole synagogue, taught that his laws are necessary to salvation: therefore, he was a teacher of weak and beggarly elements, wherewith he made the church of Christ throughout the whole world most weak and beggarly; that is to say, he burdened and

miserably tormented the church with his wicked laws, defacing Christ, and burying his gospel.

- Verse 9. *Whereunto ye will be in bondage again.*

This he addeth, to declare that he speaketh of proud and presumptuous hypocrites, which seek to be justified by the law, as I have shewed before. For otherwise he calleth the law holy and good. As, We know that the law is good, if a man use it rightly (1 Tim. i.), that is to say, civilly to bridle evil doers, and spiritually to increase transgressions (Gal. iii. 19.). But whosoever observeth the law to obtain righteousness before God, maketh the law, which is good, damnable and hurtful unto himself. He reproveth the Galatians therefore, because they would be in bondage to the law again, which doth not take away sin, but increaseth sin. For whilst a sinner, being weak and poor himself, seeketh to be justified by the law, he findeth nothing in it but weakness and poverty itself. And here two sick and feeble beggars meet together, of whom the one is not able to help and heal the other, but rather molesteth and troubleth the other.

We, as being strong in Christ, will gladly serve the law; not the weak and beggarly, but the mighty and rich law, that is to say, so far forth as it hath power and dominion over the body: for then we serve the law, but only in our body and outward members, and not in our conscience. But the Pope requireth that we should obey his laws with this opinion, that if we do this or that, we are righteous; if we do it not, we are damned. Here the law is no more than a weak and beggarly element. For whilst this bondage of the conscience continueth under the law, there can be nothing but mere weakness and poverty. Wherefore all the weight of the matter lieth in this word to serve. The meaning therefore of Paul is this, that he would not have the conscience to serve under the law as a captive, but to be free, and to have dominion over the law. For the conscience is dead to the law through Christ, and the law again unto the conscience. Whereof we have more largely treated afore in the second chapter.

Verse 10. *Ye observe days and months, times and years.*

By these words he plainly declareth what the false apostles taught, namely, the observation of days, months, times, and years. The Jews were commanded to keep holy the sabbath-day, the new moons, the first and the seventh month, the three appointed times or feasts, namely, the paschal or passover, the feasts of weeks, of the tabernacles, and the year of jubilee. These ceremonies the Galatians were constrained by the false apostles to keep as necessary to righteousness. Therefore he saith, that they, losing the grace and liberty which they had in Christ, were turned back to the serving of weak and beggarly elements. For they were persuaded by the false apostles, that these laws must needs be kept, and, by keeping of them, they should obtain righteousness; but, if they keep them not, they should be damned. Contrariwise, Paul can in no wise suffer that men's consciences should be bound to the law of Moses, but always delivered them from the law. Behold I, Paul (saith he, a little after, in the fifth chapter), do write unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. And, Let no man judge you in meat or drink, or in a piece of an holy-day, or of a new moon or sabbath-day, &c. (Col. ii.) So saith our Saviour Christ: The kingdom of God cometh not with observation of the law. (Luke xvii. 20.) Much less then are men's consciences to be burthened and snared with human traditions.

Verse 11. *I am in fear of you, lest I have bestowed on you labour in vain.*

Here Paul sheweth himself to be greatly troubled through the fall of the Galatians, whom he would more bitterly reprove, but that he feareth lest, if he should deal with them more sharply, he should not only not make them better, but more offend them, and so utterly alienate their minds from him. Therefore, in writing, he changeth and mitigateth his words; and, as though all the harm redounded unto himself, he saith, I am in fear of you, lest I have bestowed my labour on you in vain: that is to say, it grieveth me that I have preached the gospel with so great diligence and faithfulness amongst you, and see no

fruit to come thereof. Notwithstanding, although he shew a very loving and a fatherly affection towards them, yet withal he chideth them somewhat sharply, but yet covertly. For when he saith, that he had laboured in vain, that is to say, that he had preached the gospel among them without any fruit; he sheweth covertly, that either they were obstinate unbelievers, or else were fallen from the doctrine of faith. Now both these, as well unbelievers as backsliders from the doctrine of faith, are sinners, wicked, unrighteous, and damned. Such therefore do obey the law in vain; they observe days, months, and years in vain. And in these words, I am in fear of you, lest I have bestowed on you labour in vain, is contained a certain secret excommunication. For the apostle meaneth hereby, that the Galatians were secluded and separate from Christ, unless they speedily returned to sound and sincere doctrine again; yet he pronounced no open sentence against them. For he perceived that he could do no good with over-sharp dealing; wherefore he changeth his style, and speaketh them fair, saying,

Verse 12. Be ye as I; for I am even as you.

Hitherto Paul hath been occupied wholly in teaching; and being moved with this great enormity and wicked revolting of the Galatians, he was vehemently incensed against them, and chid them bitterly, calling them fools, bewitched, not believing the truth, crucifiers of Christ, &c. Now the greater part of his epistle being finished, he beginneth to perceive that he had handled them too sharply. Therefore, being careful lest he should do more hurt than good through his severity, he sheweth that this his sharp chiding proceeded of a fatherly affection and a true apostolical heart: and so he amplifieth the matter with sweet and gentle words, to the end that if he had offended any (as no doubt there were many offended) by these sweet and loving words he might win them again.

And here, by his own example, he admonisheth all pastors and ministers, that they ought to bear a fatherly and motherly affection, not towards ravening wolves, but towards the poor sheep, miserably seduced and going astray, patiently bearing with their faults and infirmities, instructing and restoring them with the spirit of meek-

ness: for they cannot be brought into the right way again by any other means; and by over-sharp reprovings and rebukings they are provoked to anger, or else to desperation, but not to repentance. And here is to be noted by the way, that such is the nature and fruit of true and sound doctrine, that when it is well taught and well understood, it joineth men's hearts together with a singular concord; but when men reject godly and sincere doctrine, and embrace errors, this unity and concord is soon broken. Therefore, as soon as thou seest thy brethren seduced by vain and fantastical spirits, to fall from the article of justification, thou shalt perceive that by and by they will pursue the faithful with bitter hatred, whom before they most tenderly loved.

This we find to be true at this day in our false brethren and other sectaries, who, at the beginning of the reformation of the gospel, were glad to hear us, and read our books with great zeal and affection. They acknowledged the grace of the Holy Ghost in us, and revered us for the same, as the ministers of God. Some of them also lived familiarly with us for a time, and behaved themselves very modestly and soberly. But when they were departed from us, and perverted by the wicked doctrine of the sectaries, they shewed themselves more bitter enemies to our doctrine and our name than any other. I do much and often marvel whereupon they should conceive such a deadly hatred against us, whom they before so dearly and so tenderly loved; for we offended them not in any thing, nor gave them any occasion to hate us. Yea, they are constrained to confess, that we desire nothing more than that the glory of God may be advanced, the benefit of Christ truly known, and the truth of the gospel purely taught, which God hath now again in these latter days revealed by us unto this unthankful world; which thing should rather provoke them to love us than to hate us. I marvel therefore, not without cause, whereof this change cometh. Verily there is no other cause, but that they have gotten unto themselves new masters, and hearkened to new teachers, whose poison hath so infected them, that now of very friends they are become our mortal enemies. And I see the condition of the apostles and all other faithful ministers to be such, that their disciples and hearers being once infected with the errors of the false apostles and heretics, have and do set themselves against them,

and become their enemies. There were very few among the Galatians which continued in the sound doctrine of the apostle: all the rest being seduced by the false apostles, did not acknowledge Paul for their pastor and teacher any more; yea there was nothing more odious unto them than the name and doctrine of Paul. And I fear me, that this epistle brought very few of them back again from their error.

If the like case should happen to us; that is to say, if, in our absence, our church should be seduced by fantastical heads, and we should write hither, not one or two, but many epistles; we should prevail little or nothing at all. Our men (a few only excepted of the stronger sort) would use themselves no otherwise towards us than they do at this day which are seduced by the sectaries; who would sooner worship the Pope, than they would obey our admonitions or approve our doctrine. No man shall persuade them that they reject Christ, and return again to weak and beggarly elements, and to those which by nature are no gods. They can abide nothing less, than to hear that their teachers; by whom they are seduced, are overthrowers of the gospel of Christ, and troublers of men's consciences. The Lutherans (say they) are not only wise, they alone do not preach Christ, they alone have not the Holy Ghost, the gift of prophecy, and the true understanding of the scriptures. Our teachers are in nothing inferior unto them; yea in many things they excel them, because they follow the spirit, and teach spiritual things. Contrariwise, they never yet tasted what true divinity meant, but stick in the letter, and therefore they teach nothing but the catechism, faith, and charity, &c. Wherefore (as I am wont to say), like as to fall in faith is an easy matter; so is it most perilous, to wit, even from the high heaven into the deep pit of hell. It is not such as properly followeth the nature of man, as murder, adultery, and such like; but devilish, and the proper work of the devil. For they which so fall cannot be easily recovered, but most commonly they continue perverse and obstinate in their error. Therefore the latter end of those men is worse than the beginning, as our Saviour Christ witnesseth when he saith, The unclean spirit being cast out of his house, when he returneth, he entereth in again, not alone, but taketh unto

him seven spirits worse than himself, and there dwelleth; &c. (Matt. xii. 43.)

Paul therefore perceiving through the revelation of the Holy Ghost, that it was to be feared lest the minds of the Galatians, whom of a godly zeal he had called foolish and bewitched, &c. by this sharp chiding should rather be stirred up against him, than amended (especially since he now knew that the false apostles were among them, who would expound this sharp chiding, which proceeded from a fatherly affection, unto the worst, crying out, Now Paul, which some of you so greatly praise, sheweth what he is, and with what spirit he is led; who, when he was with you, would seem to be unto you a father, but his letters shew in his absence that he is a tyrant, &c.). Therefore, he is so troubled through a godly care and fatherly affection, that he cannot well tell how and what to write to them. For it is a dangerous thing for a man to defend his cause against those which are absent, and have now begun to hate him, and are persuaded by others that his cause is not good. Therefore, being in great perplexity, he saith a little after, I am troubled, and at my wit's end for your cause; that is, I know not what to do, or how to deal with you.

Verse 12. *Be ye as I am, for I am as ye are.*

These words are to be understood, not of doctrine, but of affections. Therefore the meaning is not, Be ye as I am; that is to say, think of doctrine as I do; but bear such an affection towards me as I do towards you. As though he would say, Perhaps I have too sharply chidden you, but pardon this my sharpness, and judge not my heart by my words, but my words by the affection of my heart. My words seem rough, and my chastisement sharp, but my heart is loving and fatherly. Therefore, O my Galatians! take this my chiding with such a mind as I bear towards you: for the matter required that I should shew myself so sharp and severe towards you.

Even so may we also say of ourselves. Our correction is severe, and our manner of writing sharp and vehement; but certainly there is no bitterness in our heart, no envy, no desire of revenge against our adversaries; but there is in us a godly carefulness and sorrow of spirit.

We do not so hate the Pope and other erroneous spirits, that we wish any evil unto them, or desire their destruction; but rather we desire that they may return again to the right way, and be saved together with us. The school-master chastiseth the scholar, not to hurt him, but to reform him. The rod is sharp, but correction is necessary for the child, and the heart of him that correcteth loving and friendly. So the father chastiseth his son, not to destroy him, but to reform and amend him. Stripes are sharp and grievous to the child, but the father's heart is loving and kind; and unless he loved his child, he would not chastise him, but cast him off, despair of his welfare, and suffer him to perish. This correction, therefore, which he giveth to his child is a token of fatherly affection, and is profitable for the child. Even so, O my Galatians! think ye likewise of my dealing towards you: then will ye not judge my chiding to be sharp and bitter, but profitable for you. Chastisement for the present time seemeth not to be joyous, but grievous; but afterwards it bringeth the quiet fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby (Heb. xii. 11.). Let the same affection therefore be in you towards me which I bear towards you. I bear a loving heart towards you: the same I desire again of you.

Thus he speaketh them fair, and with this fair speech he still continueth, that he might pacify their minds which were stirred up against him by his sharp chiding. Notwithstanding he revoketh not his severe words. Indeed he confesseth that they were sharp and bitter; but necessity (saith he) compelled me to reprehend you somewhat sharply and severely: but that which I did proceeded of a sincere and loving heart towards you. The physician giveth a bitter potion to his patient, not to hurt him, but to cure him. If then the bitterness of the medicine, which is given to the sick body, is not to be imputed to the physician, but to the medicine and the malady; judge ye also in like manner of my severe and sharp reprehension.

Verse 12. *Brethren, I beseech you; ye have not hurt me at all.*

Is this to beseech the Galatians, when he calleth them bewitched, disobedient to the truth, and crucifiers of Christ? It seemeth rather to be a great rebuke. But

contrariwise, Paul saith, that it is no rebuke, but an earnest beseeching, and indeed so it is. And it is as much as if he said, I confess that I have chidden you somewhat bitterly, but take it in good part, and then shall ye find this my chiding, to be no chiding, but a praying and a beseeching. If a father likewise do sharply correct his son, it is as much as if he said, My son, I pray thee be a good child, &c. It seemeth indeed to be a correction; but if ye respect the father's heart, it is a gentle and an earnest beseeching.

Verse 12. *Ye have not hurt me at all.*

As if he said, Why should I be angry with you, or of a malicious mind speak evil of you, seeing ye have nothing offended me? Why then sayest thou that we are perverted, that we have forsaken thy doctrine, that we are foolish, bewitched, &c. These things do witness that we have offended thee. He answereth, Ye have not offended me, but yourselves, and therefore I am thus troubled, not for mine own cause, but for the love I bear unto you. Think not, therefore, that my chiding did proceed of malice, or any evil affection. For I take God to witness, ye have done me no wrong, but contrariwise ye have bestowed great benefits upon me.

Thus speaking them fair, he prepareth their minds to suffer his fatherly chastisement with a child-like affection. And this is to temper wormwood or a bitter potion with honey and sugar, to make it sweet again. So parents speak their children fair when they have well-beaten them, giving them apples, pears, and other like things, whereby the children know that their parents love them, and seek to do them good, how sharp soever their correction doth appear.

Verse 13. *And ye know how through the infirmity of the flesh, I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And the trial of me which was in my flesh, ye despised not, neither abhorred, but ye received me as an angel of God, yea as Christ Jesus.*

Now he declareth what pleasure he had received of the Galatians. The first benefit (saith he), which I esteem as the greatest of all, was this: When I began first to preach

the gospel amongst you, and that through infirmity of the flesh and great temptations, my cross did nothing at all offend you; but ye shewed yourselves so loving, so kind, and so friendly towards me, that not only ye were not offended with this my infirmity of the flesh, with my temptations and afflictions wherewith I was almost overwhelmed; but also ye loved me dearly, and received me as an angel of God, yea rather as Christ Jesus himself. This is indeed a great commendation of the Galatians, that they received the gospel of a man so contemptible and afflicted on every side as Paul was. For where he preached the gospel amongst them, both the Jews and Gentiles murmured and raged against him. For all the mighty, wise, religious, and learned men, hated, persecuted, and blasphemed Paul. With all this the Galatians were no whit offended, but, turning their eyes from the beholding of this infirmity, these temptations and dangers, they did not only hear that poor, despised, wretched and afflicted Paul, and acknowledged themselves to be his disciples, but also they received and heard him as an angel of God, yea as Christ Jesus himself. This is a worthy commendation and a singular virtue of the Galatians: and indeed it is such a commendation as he giveth to none of all those to whom he wrote, besides these Galatians.

Jerome, and certain other of the ancient Fathers, expound this infirmity of the flesh in Paul, to be some disease of the body, or some temptation of lust. These men lived when the church was outwardly in a peaceable and prosperous state, without any cross or persecution. For then the bishops began to increase in riches, estimation, and glory in the world. And many also exercised tyranny over the people which were committed to their charge, as the ecclesiastical history witnesseth. Few did their duty, and they that would seem to do it, forsaking the doctrine of the gospel, set forth their own decrees to the people. Now when the pastors and bishops are not exercised with the word of God, but neglect the pure and sincere preaching thereof, they must needs fall into security; for they are not exercised with temptations, with the cross and persecutions, which are wont always undoubtedly to follow the pure preaching of the word. Therefore it was impossible that they should understand Paul. But we, by the grace of God, have sound and

sincere doctrine, which also we preach and teach freely, and therefore are compelled to suffer the bitter hatred, afflictions, and persecutions of the devil and the world. And if we were not exercised outwardly by tyrants and sectaries with force and subtilty, and inwardly with terrors and fiery darts of the devil, Paul should be as obscure and unknown unto us, as he was in times past to the whole world, and yet is to the papists, the anabaptists, and other our adversaries. Therefore, the gift of knowledge and interpretation of the scriptures, and our study, together with our inward and outward temptations, open unto us the meaning of Paul and the sense of all the holy scriptures.

Paul therefore calleth the infirmity of the flesh no disease of the body, or temptation of lust, but his suffering and affliction which he sustained in his body, which he setteth against the virtue and power of the spirit. But lest we should seem to wrest and pervert Paul's words, let us hear himself speaking in 2 Cor. xii. Very gladly will I rejoice rather in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in anguish for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. And in the eleventh chapter, In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more plenteous, in death oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one, I was thrice beaten with rods, I was once stoned, I suffered thrice shipwreck, &c. These afflictions which he suffered in his body he calleth the infirmity of the flesh, and not any corporal disease. As though he would say, When I preached the gospel amongst you, I was oppressed with sundry temptations and afflictions. I was always in danger, both of the Jews or the Gentiles, and also of false brethren. I suffered hunger, and wanted all things. I was the very filth and off-scouring of the world. He maketh mention of this his infirmity in many places, as in 1 Cor. iv. 2 Cor. iv. 6, 11, 12, and in many other.

We see then that Paul calleth afflictions the infirmities of the flesh, which he suffered in the flesh, like as the other apostles, the prophets, and all godly men did; notwithstanding he was mighty in spirit. For the power of Christ was in him, which always reigned and triumphed through him. Which thing he testifieth in 2 Cor. xii. in these words:

For when I am weak, then am I strong. Also, I will gladly rejoice in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. And in the second chapter, Thanks be to God, who always maketh us to triumph in Christ. As though he would say: Indeed the devil, the Jews, and the Gentiles rage cruelly against us; notwithstanding we continue constant and invincible against all their assaults, and, will they nill they, our doctrine prevaileth and triumpheth. This was the strength and power of the spirit in Paul, against the which he setteth here the infirmity and bondage of the flesh.

Now this infirmity of the flesh in the godly doth wonderfully offend reason. Therefore Paul so highly commendeth the Galatians, because they were not offended with this great infirmity, and with this vile and contemptible form of the cross which they saw in him; but received him as an angel, yea as Christ Jesus. And Christ himself also armeth the faithful against this base and contemptible form of the cross, in which he appeared when he saith, Blessed is he that is not offended in me (Matt. xi. 6.). And surely it is a great matter, that they which believe in him do acknowledge him to be Lord of all, and Saviour of the world; whom notwithstanding they hear to have been the most miserable of all others, the least of men, yea a very scorn of men, and a contempt of the world (Palm xxii. 7.); briefly, despised and hated of all men, and condemned to the death of the cross, and even of his own people, and especially of those that were esteemed the best, the wisest and holiest of all other. This is a great matter, I say, not to be moved with these great offences, and to be able, not only to condemn them, but also to esteem this poor Christ, so spitefully scorned, spit upon, whipped, and crucified, more than the riches of all the richest, the strength of all the strongest, the wisdom of the wisest, the holiness of all the holiest men, with all the crowns and sceptres of all the kings and princes of the whole world. They therefore are worthily called blessed of Christ, which are not offended in him.

Now Paul had not only outward temptations (whereof I have spoken already), but also inward and spiritual temptations, as Christ had in the garden: such as that was whereof he complaineth in the 2 Cor. xii. That he felt the prick or sting of the flesh, and the angel of Satan

which buffeted him. This I say by the way, because the papists expound this to be a motion of fleshly lust; but it was a spiritual temptation. And herein is no repugnance, in that he added this word flesh, saying, A prick was given me in the flesh. Yea he calleth it of purpose a prick [or thorn] in the flesh. For the Galatians, and others which were conversant with Paul, had seen him oftentimes in great heaviness, anguish, and terror. Wherefore the apostles had not only bodily, but also spiritual temptations; which also he confesseth in 2 Cor. vii. in these words: Fightings without, and terrors within. And Luke saith, in the last of the Acts, that Paul, when he had long striven in the tempests of the sea, even unto the heaviness of his spirit, was again refreshed, and waxed bold when he saw the brethren that came from Rome to meet him at the market of Appius and three Taverns. Also, in Phil. ii. he confesseth, that God had mercy upon him, in that he restored Epaphroditus, so weak and near to death, unto health again, lest he should have sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore, besides outward temptations, the apostles also suffered great anguish, heaviness, and terrors.

But why saith Paul that he was not despised of the Galatians? It seemeth that they despised him, when they fell away from his gospel. Paul expoundeth himself. When I first preached to you the gospel (saith he) ye did not as other people have done, who, being greatly offended through this my infirmity and temptation of the flesh, have despised and rejected me. For man's reason is soon offended with this vile and contemptible form of the cross, and judged those to be stark mad, which, being so afflicted, will go about to comfort, to help, and to succour others: also, those that boast of their great riches, that is to say, of righteousness, strength, victory over sin, death, and all evils, of joy, salvation, and everlasting life, and yet notwithstanding are needy, weak, heavy-hearted, and despised, evil-intreated and slain, as very noisome poisons both of common-weals and religion, and they which kill them, think they do high service unto God (John xvi. 2.). Therefore, when they promise unto others eternal treasures, and they themselves perish so wretchedly before the world, they are laughed to scorn, and compelled to hear, Physician cure thyself (Luke iv. 23.). And hereof come these complaints, which are every where in the Psalms: I am a worm and no man, &c.

Again, Depart not from me, for tribulation is at hand, and there is none to help, &c. (Psalm xxii. 6, 11.)

This is therefore a great commendation of the Galatians, that they were not offended with this infirmity and temptation of Paul, but received him as an angel of God, yea as Christ Jesus. It is indeed a great virtue and worthy of great praise, to hear the apostles; but it is a greater, and a true Christian virtue, to give ear unto one so miserable, weak, and contemptible as Paul was among the Galatians (as here he witnesseth of himself), and to receive him as an angel from heaven, and to give him such honour as if he had been Christ Jesus himself, and not to be offended with his afflictions, being so great and so many. Wherefore by these words he highly commendeth the virtue of the Galatians, which he saith he will keep in perpetual remembrance, and so greatly esteemeth the same, that he desireth it may be known unto all men. Notwithstanding, in setting forth so highly their benefits and praises, he sheweth covertly how entirely they loved him before the coming of the false apostles, and therewithal he moveth them to continue as they began, and to embrace him with no less love and reverence than they did before. And hereby it may also appear, that the false apostles had greater authority among the Galatians than Paul himself had. For the Galatians, being moved with their authority, preferred them far above Paul, whom before they so dearly loved and received as an angel of God, &c.

Verse 15. *What was then your felicity!*

As if he would say, How happy were ye counted! How much were ye then praised and commended! The like manner of speech we have in the song of the Virgin Mary—All generations shall call me blessed (Luke i. 48.). And these words, What was then your felicity! contain in them a certain vehemency. As if he should say, Ye were not only blessed, but in all things most blessed and highly commended. Thus he goeth about to qualify and mitigate his bitter portion, that is to say, his sharp chiding, fearing least the Galatians should be offended therewith: especially seeing he knew that the false apostles would slander him, and most spitefully interpret his words. For this is the quality and nature of these vipers,

that they will slander and maliciously pervert those words which proceed from a simple and sincere heart, and wrest them clean contrary to the true sense and meaning thereof. They are marvellous cunning workmen in this matter, far passing all the wit and eloquence of all the rhetoricians in the world. For they are led with a wicked spirit, which so bewitcheth them, that they being inflamed with a devilish rage against the faithful, can no otherwise do, but maliciously interpret, and wickedly pervert their words and writings. Therefore they are like unto the spider, that sucketh venom out of sweet and pleasant flowers; which proceedeth not of the flowers, but of their own venomous nature, which turneth that into poison, that of itself is good and wholesome. Paul, therefore, by these mild and sweet words, goeth about to prevent the false apostles, to the end they should have no occasion to slander and pervert his words after this manner: Paul handleth you very ungently, he calleth you foolish, bewitched, and disobedient to the truth, which is a sure token that he seeketh not your salvation, but accounteth you as damned and rejected from Christ.

Verse 15. For I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

He praiseth the Galatians above measure. Ye did not only intreat me (saith he) most courteously and with all reverence, receiving me as an angel of God, &c.; but also, if necessity had required, ye would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me: yea, you would have bestowed your lives for me. And indeed the Galatians bestowed their lives for him; for in that they received and maintained Paul (whom the world accounted most execrable and accursed), they turned upon their own heads, as receivers and maintainers of Paul, the cruel hatred and indignation of all the Jews and Gentiles.

So also at this day the name of Luther is most odious to the word. He that praiseth me, sinneth worse than any idolater, blasphemer, perjurer, whoremonger, adulterer, murderer or thief. It must needs be therefore that the Galatians were well-established in the doctrine and faith of Christ, seeing that they, with so great danger of their lives, received and maintained Paul, which was hated

throughout all the word; for else they would never have sustained that cruel hatred of the whole world.

Verse 16. *Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?*

Here he sheweth the reason why he speaketh the Galatians so fair. For he suspecteth that they take him for their enemy, because he had reproved them so sharply. I pray you (saith he) set apart these rebukes, and separate them from doctrine, and ye shall find that my purpose was not to rebuke you, but to teach you the truth. Indeed I confess that my epistle is sharp and severe; but by this severity I go about to call you back again to the truth of the gospel, from the which ye are fallen, and to keep you in the same; therefore, apply this sharpness and this bitter portion, not to your persons, but to your disease: and judge me not to be your enemy in rebuking you so sharply, but rather think that I am your father. For unless I loved you dearly as my children, and knew also that I am beloved of you, I would not have reproved you so sharply.

It is the part of a friend freely to admonish his friend if he do amiss; and when he is so admonished, if he be wise, he is not angry with the other, which hath so kindly admonished him and told him the truth, but giveth him thanks. It is commonly seen in the world, that truth bringeth hatred, and that he is accounted an enemy which speaketh the truth. But amongst friends it is not so; much less amongst Christians. Seeing therefore I have reprehended you of mere love, to the end ye might abide in the truth, ye ought not to be offended with me, nor lose the truth, or think me your enemy because of my friendly and fatherly reprehension. All these things are spoken of Paul to confirm that which was said before: Be ye as I am: ye have not hurt me, &c.

Verse 17. *They are jealous over you amiss.*

He reproveth here the flattery of the false apostles. For Satan is wont by his ministers, through wonderful subtilty and crafty slights, to beguile the simple: as Paul saith, With fair speech and flattery they deceive the hearts of the simple (Rom. xvi.). For first of all they make great

protestations that they seek nothing else but the advancement of God's glory: and moreover, that they are moved by the spirit (because the miserable people are neglected, or else because the truth is not purely taught of others), to teach the infallible truth, that by this means the elect may be delivered from error, and may come to the true light and knowledge of the truth. Moreover, they promise undoubted salvation to those that receive their doctrine. If vigilant and faithful pastors do not withstand these ravening wolves, they will do great harm to the church under this pretence of godliness, and under this sheep's clothing. For the Galatians might say, Why dost thou inveigh so bitterly against our teachers, for that they be jealous over us? For that which they do, they do of zeal and mere love: this ought not to offend thee, &c. Indeed (saith he) they are jealous over you, but their jealousy is not good.

Here note that zeal or jealousy properly signifieth an angry love, or as ye would say, a godly envy. Elias saith: I have been very jealous for the Lord of Hosts (2 Kings xix. 10.). After this manner the husband is jealous towards his wife, the father towards his son, the brother towards his brother, that is to say, they love them entirely; yet so that they hate their vices, and go about to amend them. Such a zeal the false apostles pretended to bear towards the Galatians. Paul indeed confesseth that they were very zealous towards the Galatians, but their zeal (saith he) was not good. Now, by this colour and subtle pretence the simple are deceived, when these seducers do make them to believe that they bear a great zeal and affection towards them, and that they are very careful for them: Paul therefore warneth us here to put a difference between a good zeal and an evil zeal. Indeed a good zeal is to be commended, but not an evil zeal. I am as zealous over you (saith Paul) as they. Now judge ye which of our zeals is better, mine or theirs; which is good and godly; which is evil and carnal. Therefore, let not their zeal so easily seduce you. For,

Verse 17. *They would exclude us, that you should altogether love them.*

As if he said: True it is, that they are very zealous towards you, but by this means they seek that ye again

should be zealous towards them, and reject me. If their zeal were sincere and godly, then surely they would be content that I also should be beloved of you as well as they. But they hate our doctrine, and therefore their desire is that it may be utterly abolished, and their own preached amongst you. Now, to the end they might bring this to pass, they go about by this jealousy to pluck your hearts from me, and to make me odious unto you, that when ye have received an hatred against me and my doctrine, and turned your affection and zeal towards them, ye should love them only, and receive no other doctrine but theirs. Thus he bringeth the false apostles into suspicion among the Galatians, shewing that by this goodly pretence they go about to deceive them. So our Saviour Christ also warneth us, saying, Take heed of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's-clothing (Matt. vii. 15.).

Paul suffered the same temptation which we suffer at this day. He was marvellously troubled with this enormity, that after the preaching of his doctrine, which was divine and holy, he saw so many sects, commotions, dissipations of common-weals, changes of kingdoms, and other like things to ensue, which were the cause of infinite evils and offences. He was accused by the Jews to be a pernicious fellow, a mover of sedition in his whole nation, and to be an author of the sect of the Nazarites (Acts xxiv. 5.) As if they had said: This is a seditious and a blasphemous fellow; for he preacheth such things whereby he not only overthroweth the Jewish common-wealth, excellently well-ordered and established by the laws of God; but also abolisheth even the ten commandments, the religion and service of God, and our priesthood, and publisheth throughout the world the gospel (as he calleth it), whereof are sprung infinite evils, seditions, offences, and sects. He was compelled to hear of the Gentiles also, which cried out against him at Philippi, that he was a troubler of the city, and preached ordinances which were not lawful for them to receive (Acts xvi.)

Such troubles of common-weals and other calamities, as famine, wars, dissensions, and sects, the Jews and Gentiles imputed to the doctrine of Paul and of the other apostles; and therefore they persecuted them as common plagues, and enemies of the public peace and of religion.

The apostles, notwithstanding all this, did not cease to do their office, but most constantly preached and confessed Christ. For they knew that they should rather obey God than men (Acts v. 29.); and that it was better that the whole world should be troubled and in an uproar, than that Christ should not be preached, or that one soul should be neglected and perish.

In the mean time it was (no doubt) a heavy cross to the apostles to see these offences; for they were not made of iron. It was a wonderful grief unto them, that that people for whose sakes Paul wished to be separate from Christ, should perish with all their ornaments (Rom. ix.) They saw that great tumults and changes of kingdoms should follow their doctrine. And (which was more bitter unto them than death itself, but especially to Paul) they saw that even amongst them there sprang up many sects. It was heavy news to Paul, when he heard that the Corinthians denied the resurrection of the dead; when he heard that the churches which were planted by his ministry were troubled; that the gospel was overthrown by the false apostles, and that all Asia was revolted from his doctrine, and certain great personages besides.

But he knew that his doctrine was not the cause of these offences and sects, and therefore he was not discouraged; he forsook not his vocation, but went forward, knowing that the gospel which he preached was the power of God to salvation to all that believe, howsoever it seem to the Jews and Gentiles to be a foolish and offensive doctrine (Rom. i. 16.). He knew that they are blessed which are not offended by this word of the cross, whether they be teachers or hearers, as Christ himself saith: Blessed is he which is not offended in me. Contrariwise, he knew that they were condemned, which judgeth this doctrine to be foolish and heretical. Therefore he saith, as Christ did of the Jews and Gentiles, which were offended with this doctrine: Let them alone, they are blind and leaders of the blind (Matt. xv. 14.).

We also are constrained at this day to hear the same spoken of us, which was said of Paul and the other apostles; to wit, that the doctrine of the gospel which we profess, is the cause of many and great enormities, as of seditions, wars, sects, and innumerable offences. Yea they impute unto us all the troubles which are at this day. Surely we teach no heresies or wicked doctrine, but we

preach the glad tidings concerning Christ, that he is our high priest and our redeemer. Moreover, our adversaries are constrained (if they will confess the truth) to grant us this, that we have given no occasion, through our doctrine, of seditions, wars, or tumults; but always have taught that honour and reverence must be given to the magistrates, because God hath so commanded. Neither are we the authors of offences; but in that the wicked are offended, the fault is in themselves and not in us. God hath commanded us to preach the doctrine of the gospel without any respect of offence. But because this doctrine condemneth the wicked doctrine and idolatry of our adversaries, they being provoked thereby, raise offences of themselves, which the schoolmen call offences taken, which they said ought not to be avoided, nor can be avoided.

Christ taught the gospel, having no regard to the offence of the Jews. Suffer them (saith he), they are blind and leaders of the blind (Matt. xv. 14.). The more the priest forbad the apostles to preach in the name of Christ, the more the apostles gave witness that the same Jesus, whom they had crucified, is both Lord and Christ, and whosoever should call upon him should be saved; and that there is none other name given unto men under heaven, whereby they must be saved, &c. (Acts ii. 21, 36. iv. 12.). Even so we preach Christ at this day, not regarding the clamours of the wicked papists and all our adversaries, which cry out that our doctrine is seditious and full of blasphemy; that it troubleth common-weals, overthroweth religion, and teacheth heresies; and briefly, that it is the cause of all evils. When Christ and his apostles preached, the same was said likewise of them. Not long after the Romans came, and according to their own prophesy, destroyed both the place and the nation. Wherefore let the enemies of the gospel at this day take heed that they be not overwhelmed with these evils, which they prophesy unto themselves.

These they make grievous and heinous offences, that monks and priests do marry wives, that we eat flesh upon the Fridays, and such like. But this is no offence to them at all, that by their wicked doctrine they seduce and daily destroy innumerable souls; that by their evil example they offend the weak; that they blaspheme and condemn the glorious gospel of the mighty God; and

that they persecute and kill those that love the sincerity of doctrine and the word of life; this (I say) is to them no offence, but an obedience, a service, and an acceptable sacrifice unto God. Let us suffer them therefore: For they are blind and leaders of the blind (Matt. xv. 14.). He that hurteth, let him hurt still; and he that is filthy, let him be more filthy (Apoc. xii.). But we, because we believe, will speak and set forth the wonderful works of the Lord so long as we have breath, and will endure the persecutions of our adversaries, until the time that Christ, our high bishop and king, shall come from heaven, who, we hope, will come shortly, as a just judge, to take vengeance of all those that obey not the gospel. So be it.

With these offences which the wicked allege, the godly are nothing moved. For they know that the devil hateth nothing more than the pure doctrine of the gospel, and therefore he goeth about to deface it with innumerable offences, that by this means he might root it out of men's hearts for ever. Before, when nothing else was taught in the church but man's traditions, the devil did not so rage. For whilst the strong man kept the house, all that he possessed was in peace; but now, when a stronger cometh, which vanquisheth and bindeth that strong one and spoileth his house, then he beginneth to rage indeed (Luke xi. 21, 22.). And this is an infallible token, that the doctrine which we profess is of God. For else (as it is said in the 40th of Job) that Behemoth would lie hid under the trees in the covert of the reed and fens. But now, that he rangeth about like a roaring lion, and stirreth up such hurly-burles, it is a manifest token that he feeleth the power of our preaching (1 Pet. v. 8.).

When Paul saith, They are jealous over you, but amiss, he sheweth by the way who are the authors of sects; to wit, those jealous spirits which in all times overthrow the true doctrine, and trouble the public peace. For these being stirred up with a perverse zeal, imagine that they have a certain singular holiness, modesty, patience, and doctrine above others, and therefore they think that they are able to provide for the salvation of all men; that they can teach more profound and profitable things, ordain better service and ceremonies than all other teachers besides, whom they despise as nothing in comparison of themselves; and abase their authority, and cor-

rupt those things which they have purely taught. The false apostles had such a wicked and perverse zeal, stirring up sects, not only in Galatia, but also in all the places wheresoever Paul and the other apostles had preached; after the which sects followed innumerable offences and marvellous troubles. For the devil (as Christ saith) is a liar and a murderer (John viii. 44.), and therefore he is wont not only to trouble men's consciences by false doctrine, but also to stir up tumults, seditions, wars, and all mischief.

There are very many at this day which are possessed with this kind of jealousy, which pretend great religion, modesty, doctrine, and patience, and yet in very deed they are ravening wolves; who with their hypocrisy seek nothing else but to discredit us, that the people might esteem, love, and reverence them only, and receive no other doctrine but theirs. Now, because these men have a great opinion of themselves and despise others, it cannot be, but that there must needs follow horrible dissensions, sects, divisions, and seditions. But what should we do? We cannot remedy this matter; as Paul could not do in his time. Notwithstanding he gained some, which obeyed his admonitions. So I hope also that we have called some back from the errors of the sectaries.

Verse 18. But it is a good thing to love earnestly always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

As if he should say: I commend you for this, that ye loved me so entirely when I preached the gospel amongst you in the infirmity of the flesh. Ye ought to bear the same affection towards me now when I am absent, even as if I had never departed from you. For although I be absent in the body, yet have ye my doctrine, which ye ought to retain and maintain, seeing ye received the Holy Ghost through it; thinking with yourselves, that Paul is always present with you as long as ye have his doctrine. I do not therefore reprehend your zeal, but I praise it; and so far forth I praise it, as it is the zeal of God or of the spirit, and not of the flesh. Now, the zeal of the spirit is always good: for it is an earnest affection and motion of the heart to a good thing, and so is not the zeal of the flesh. He commendeth therefore the zeal of

the Galatians, that thereby he may pacify their minds, and that they may patiently suffer his correction. As if he would say: Take my correction in good part; for it proceedeth of no displeasure, but of a sorrowful heart, and careful for your salvation. This is a lively example to teach all ministers how to be careful for their sheep, and to assay every way, that by chiding, fair speaking, or intreating, they may keep them in sound doctrine, and turn them from subtil seducers and false teachers.

Verse 19. *My little children, of whom I travel in birth again, until Christ be formed in you.*

All his words are weighty and fitly framed to the purpose, that they may move the hearts of the Galatians, and win their favour again. And these are sweet and loving words, when he calleth them his children. When he saith, Of whom I travel in birth, it is an allegory. For the apostles are in the stead of parents; as schoolmasters also are in their place and calling. For as parents beget the bodily form, so they beget the form of the mind. Now the form of a Christian mind is faith, or the confidence of the heart that layeth hold upon Christ, and cleaveth to him alone, and to nothing else. The heart being furnished with this confidence or assurance; to wit, that for Christ's sake we are righteous, hath the true form of Christ. Now, this form is given by the ministry of the word, as it is said (1 Cor. iv.), I have begotten you through the gospel, that is to say, in spirit, that ye might know Christ, and believe in him. Also (2 Cor. iii.), Ye are the epistle of Christ ministered by us and written, not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God. For the word cometh from the mouth of the apostle or of the minister, and entereth into the heart of him that heareth it. There the Holy Ghost is present, and imprinteth the word in the heart, so that it consenteth unto it. Thus every godly teacher is a father, which gendereth and formeth the true shape of a Christian heart, and that by the ministry of the word.

Moreover, by these words, Of whom I travel in birth, he toucheth the false apostles. As though he would say, I did beget you rightly through the gospel; but these corrupters have formed a new shape in your heart, not of Christ, but of Moses; so that now your affiance is not

grounded any more upon Christ, but upon the works of the law. This is not the true form of Christ, but it is another form, and altogether devilish. And he saith not, Of whom I travel in birth until my form be fashioned in you, but until Christ be formed in you; that is to say, I travel that ye may receive again the form and similitude of Christ, and not of Paul. In which words he again reproveth the false apostles; for they had abolished the form of Christ in the hearts of the believers, and had devised another form, that is to say, their own; as he saith (chap. vi.), They would have you circumcised; that they might rejoice in your flesh.

Of this form of Christ he speaketh also in the third to the Colossians: Put ye on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. Paul therefore goeth about to repair the form of Christ, in the Galatians, that was disfigured and corrupted by the false apostles; which is, that they should think, and will, as God doth, whose thought and will is, that we should obtain remission of our sins and everlasting life by Jesus Christ his only Son, whom he sent into the world to the end he might be the propitiation of our sins, and that we should know that through this his Son he is appeased, and become our loving father. They that believe this are like unto God; that is to say, all their thoughts are of God, as the affection of their heart is: they have the same form in their mind which is in God or in Christ. This is, to be renewed in the spirit of our mind, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, as Paul saith (Eph. iv.).

He saith then, that he travelleth again of the Galatians in birth, and yet so, notwithstanding, that the form of the children should not be the form of the apostle, so that the children should not resemble the form of Paul or of Cephas, &c. but of another father, that is to say, of Christ. I will fashion him (saith he) in you, that the same mind may be in you, which was in Christ himself (Phil. ii. 5.). To be brief: I travel of you; that is to say, I labour carefully to call you back to your former faith, the which ye have lost (being deceived by the craft and subtilty of the false apostles), and are returned to the law and works. Therefore I must now again carefully travel to bring you back from the law to the faith of Christ. This he calleth to travel in birth, &c.

Verse 20. *And I would I were with you now, that I might change my voice, &c.*

These are the true cares of an apostle. It is a common saying, that a letter is a dead messenger; for it can give no more than it hath. And no epistle or letter is written so exactly, wherein there is not somewhat lacking. For the circumstances are divers; there is a diversity of times, places, persons, manners, and affections, all which no epistle can express: therefore it moveth the reader diversly, making him now sad, now merry, as he himself is disposed. But if any thing be spoken sharply or out of time, the lively voice of a man may expound, mitigate, or correct the same. Therefore the apostle wisheth that he were with them, to the end he might temper and change his voice as if he should see it needful by the qualities of their affection. As, if he should see any of them very much troubled, he might so temper his words, that they should not be oppressed thereby with more heaviness: contrariwise, if he should see others high-minded, he might sharply reprehend them, lest they should be too secure and careless, and so at length become contemners of God.

Wherefore he could not devise how he, being absent, should deal with them by letters. As if he should say; If my epistle be too sharp, I fear I shall more offend than amend some of you. Again; If it be too gentle, it will not profit those which are perverse and obstinate; for dead letters and words give no more than they have. Contrariwise, the lively voice of a man compared to an epistle, is a queen: for it can add and diminish, it can change itself into all manner of affections, times, places, and persons. To be brief, I would gladly convert you by letters, that is to say, call you back from the law to the faith of Jesus Christ; but I fear that I shall not so do by my dead letters. But if I were with you, I could change my voice, I could reprove them bitterly that are obstinate, and comfort the weak with sweet and loving words, as occasion should require.

Verse 20. *For I am troubled for you.*

That is to say: I am so troubled in my spirit, that I know not how by letters to behave myself towards you. Here is a lively description of the true affection of an apostle. He omitteth nothing; he chideth the Galatians; he entreateth them; he speaketh them fair; he highly commendeth their faith; labouring by all means to bring them back again to the truth of the gospel, and to deliver them out of the snares of the false apostles. These are vehement words, proceeding from a heart stirred up and inflamed with a hot burning zeal, and therefore ought diligently to be considered.

Verse 21. *Tell me, ye that will be under the law, do ye not hear the law?*

Here would Paul have closed up his epistle: for he desired not to write any more, but rather to be present with the Galatians, and to speak unto them himself. But he being in great perplexity, and very careful for this matter, taketh by the way this allegory, which then came into his mind. For the people are greatly delighted with allegories and similitudes, and therefore Christ himself oftentimes useth them. For they are, as it were, certain pictures which set forth things as if they were painted before the eyes of the simple, and therefore they move and persuade very much, especially the simple and ignorant. First, therefore, he stirreth up the Galatians with words and writings. Secondly, he painteth out the matter itself before their eyes with this goodly allegory.

Now Paul was a marvellous cunning workman in handling of allegories; for he is wont to apply them to the doctrine of faith, to grace, and to Christ, and not to the law and the works thereof, as Origen and Hierome do, who are worthily reprehended, for that they turned the plain sentences of the scripture, where allegories have no place, into unfit and foolish allegories. Therefore to use allegories, it is oftentimes a very dangerous thing. For unless a man have the perfect knowledge of Christian doctrine, he cannot use allegories rightly and as he should do.

But why doth Paul call the book of Genesis, out of

the which he allegeth the history of Ishmael and of Isaac, the law, seeing that book containeth nothing at all concerning the law; and especially that place which he allegeth, speaketh not of any law, but only containeth a plain history of Abraham's two children? Paul is wont to call the first book of Moses the law after the manner of the Jews, which, although it contain no law besides the law of circumcision, but principally teacheth faith, and witnesseth that the patriarchs pleased God because of their faith; yet the Jews notwithstanding, because of the law of circumcision therein contained, called the book of Genesis, with the rest of the books of Moses, the law. So did Paul himself also being a Jew. And Christ, under the name of the law, comprehendeth not only the books of Moses, but also the Psalms—But it is, that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law: They hated me without a cause (John xv. Psalm xxxv. 19.).

Verse 22, 23. For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a servant, and one by a free woman. But he which was of the servant was born after the flesh, and he which was of the free woman was born after the promise.

As if he said: Ye forsake grace, faith, and Christ, and turn back again to the law; ye will be under the law, and become wise through it. Therefore I will talk with you of the law. I pray you consider the law diligently. Ye shall find that Abraham had two sons, Ishmael by Agar, and Isaac by Sarah. They were both the true sons of Abraham. Ishmael was as well the true son of Abraham as Isaac was, for both came of one father, of one flesh, and of one seed. What was then the difference? This maketh not the difference (saith Paul); that the mother of the one was free and the other bond (albeit it pertaineth to the allegory); but that Ishmael, which was born of the bond woman, was born after the flesh; that is to say, without the promise and the word of God. But Isaac was not only born of the free woman, but also according to the promise. What then? Yet was Isaac notwithstanding as well born of the seed of Abraham as Ishmael was. I grant that they were both the children of one father, and yet notwithstanding there is a difference. For although Isaac was born of the flesh, yet

the promise went before. None observed this difference but only Paul, which he gathered out of the text of Genesis after this manner.

Whereas Agar conceived and brought forth Ishmael, there was no word of God that foreshewed that this should come to pass; but by the permission of Sarah, Abraham went in to his servant Agar, whom Sarah, being barren, had given to wife to Abraham, as is said in the book of Genesis. For Sarah had heard that Abraham, by the promise of God, should have seed of his body, and she hoped that she should be the mother of this seed. But when she had waited now for the promise many years with great anguish of spirit, and saw that the matter was so long deferred, she was out of hope. This holy woman therefore giveth place for the honour of her husband, and resigneth her right to another, that is to say, to her maid. Notwithstanding she suffereth not her husband to marry another wife out of his house, but she giveth unto him in marriage her servant, to the end that she might be builded by her. For so saith the history: Now Sarah, Abraham's wife, bare him no children; and she had a maid, an Egyptian, Agar by name. And Sarah said unto Abraham, Behold now the Lord hath restrained me from child-bearing. I pray thee go in to my maid: it may be that I shall be builded by her (Gen. xvi.). This was a great humility of Sarah, who so abased herself, and took in good part this temptation and trial of her faith. For thus she thought: God is no liar; that which he hath promised to my husband, he will surely perform. But peradventure God will not that I shall be the mother of that seed. It shall not grieve me that Agar should have this honour, unto whom let my lord enter, for I may peradventure be builded by her.

Ishmael therefore is born without the word, at the only request of Sarah. For there is no word of God which commanded Abraham thus to do, or promised unto him a son, but all this is done at adventure. Which also the words of Sarah do declare—It may be (saith she) that I shall be builded by her. Seeing therefore there was no word of God spoken to Abraham before, as there was when Sarah should bring forth Isaac, but only the word of Sarah; it is evident enough that Ishmael was the son of Abraham after the flesh only, without the word of

God: therefore he was born at adventure, and unlooked for as another child is. This Paul observed and diligently considered.

In the ninth to the Romans he prosecuteth the same argument, which here he repeateth and setteth in an allegory, and concludeth strongly, that all the sons of Abraham are not the sons of God. Abraham (saith he) hath two sorts of children. Some are born of his flesh and blood, but the word and promise of God goeth before, as Isaac. Other are born without the promise, as Ishmael. Therefore the children of the flesh (saith he) are not the children of God, but the children of the promise, &c. And by this argument he mightily stoppeth the mouths of the proud Jews, which gloried that they were the seed and children of Abraham; as also Christ doth in the third of Matthew, and in the eighth of John. As if he said, It followeth not, I am the carnal seed of Abraham, therefore I am the child of God; Esau is the natural son, therefore the heir. Stay rather (saith he) they that will be the children of Abraham, besides their carnal birth, must be also the sons of the promise, and must believe. And they are the true children of Abraham, and consequently of God, who have the promise, and believe.

But Ishmael, because he was not promised of God to Abraham, is a son after the flesh only, and not after the promise, and therefore he was born at adventure, as other children be. For no mother knoweth whether she shall have a child or no, or if she perceive herself to be with child, yet she cannot tell whether it shall be a son or a daughter. But Isaac was expressly named (Gen. xvii.). Sarah thy wife (saith the angel to Abraham) shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac. Here the son and the mother are expressly named. Thus, for this humility of Sarah, because she gave up her right, and suffered the contempt of Agar (Gen. xvi.), God requited her with this honour, that she should be the mother of the promised son, &c.

Verse 24. *The which things are spoken by allegories.*

Allegories do not strongly persuade in divinity, but as certain pictures they beautify and set out the matter. For if Paul had not proved the righteousness of faith against the righteousness of works by strong and pithy argu-

ments, he should have little prevailed by this allegory. But because he had fortified his cause before with invincible arguments, taken of experience, of the example of Abraham, the testimonies of the scripture, and similitudes; now in the end of his disputations he addeth an allegory, to give a beauty to all the rest. For it is a seemly thing sometimes to add an allegory, when the foundation is well laid, and the matter thoroughly proved. For as painting is an ornament to set forth and garnish an house already builded, so is an allegory the light of a matter which is already otherwise proved and confirmed.

Verse 25. For these mothers are the two testaments: the one which is Agar of Mount Sina, which gendereth unto bondage. (For Agar or Sina is a mountain in Arabia.)

Abraham is a figure of God, which hath two sons, that is to say, two sorts of people who are represented by Ishmael and Isaac. These two are born unto him by Agar and Sarah, the which signifieth the two testaments, the old and the new. The old is of Mount Sina, begetting unto bondage, which is Agar. For the Arabians in their language call Agar the same mountain which the Jews call Sina (which seemeth to have that name of brambles and thorns); which also Ptolomæus and the Greek commentaries do witness. After the same manner, divers names are given to many mountains, according to the diversity of nations. So the mount which Moses calleth Hermon, of the Sidonians is called Sirion, and of the Amorites Senir.

Now this serveth very well to the purpose, that Mount Sina in the Arabian language signifieth as much as an hand-maid; and I think the likeness of this name gave Paul light and occasion to seek out this allegory. Likewise then as Agar the bond-maid brought forth to Abraham a son, and yet not an heir but a servant; so Sina, the allegorical Agar, brought forth to God a son, that is to say, a carnal people. Again, as Ishmael was the true son of Abraham, so the people of Israel had the true God to be their father, which gave them his law, his oracles, religion, and true service, and the temple; as it is said in Psalm cxlvii. He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. Notwithstanding this only was the difference: Ishmael was born of a bond-maid after the flesh, that is to say, without the

promise, and could not therefore be the heir. So the mystical Agar, that is to say, Mount Sina, where the law was given, and the old testament ordained, brought forth to God, the great Abraham, a people, but without the promise, that is to say, a carnal and a servile people, and not the heir of God. For the promises, as touching Christ the giver of all blessing, and as touching the deliverance from the curse of the law, from sin and death, also as touching the free remission of sins, of righteousness and everlasting life, are not added to the law: but the law saith, He that shall do these things shall live in them (Lev. xviii. 5. Rom. x. 5.)

Therefore the promises of the law are conditional, promising life, not freely, but to such as fulfil the law, and therefore they leave men's consciences in doubt: for no man fulfilleth the law. But the promises of the New Testament have no such condition joined unto them, nor require any thing of us, nor depend upon any condition of our worthiness, but bring and give unto us freely forgiveness of sins, grace, righteousness, and life everlasting for Christ's sake, as I have said more largely in another place.

Therefore the law, or the Old Testament, containeth only conditional promises; for it hath always such conditions as these are joined to it: If ye hearken to my voice; if ye keep my statutes; if ye walk in my ways, ye shall be my people, &c. The Jews, not considering this, laid hold of those conditional promises as if they had been absolute and without all condition; which they supposed that God could never revoke, but must needs keep them. Hereupon, when they heard the prophets foreshew the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, of the temple, of the kingdom and priesthood (which could well discern betwixt the corporal promises of the law, and the spiritual promises concerning Christ and his kingdom); they persecuted and killed them as heretics and blasphemers of God: for they saw not this condition that was annexed: If ye keep my commandments, it shall go well with you, &c.

Therefore Agar the bond-maid bringeth forth but a bond-servant. Ishmael then is not the heir, although he be the natural son of Abraham, but remaineth a bond-man. What is here lacking? The promise and the blessing of the word. So the law given in Mount Sina, which the Arabians call Agar, begetteth none but ser-

vants. For the promise made as concerning Christ, was not annexed to the law. Wherefore, O ye Galatians! if ye forsaking the promise and faith, fall back to the law and works, ye shall always continue servants; that is, ye shall never be delivered from sin and death, but ye shall always abide under the curse of the law. For Agar gendereth not the seed of the promise and heirs, that is to say, the law justifieth not, it bringeth not the adoption and inheritance, but rather hindereth the inheritance, and worketh wrath.

Verse 25. And it answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and she is in bondage with her children.

This is a wonderful allegory. As Paul a little before made Agar of Sina, so now of Jerusalem he would gladly make Sarah, but he dared not, neither can he so do; but is compelled to join Jerusalem with Mount Sina; for he saith, The same belongeth to Agar, seeing Mount Agar reacheth even to Jerusalem. And it is true, that there be continual mountains reaching from Arabia Petrea unto Cades Bernea of Jury. He saith then, that this Jerusalem which now is, that is to say, this earthly and temporal Jerusalem is not Sarah, but pertaineth to Agar, for there Agar reigneth. For in it is the law begetting unto bondage; in it is the worship and ceremonies, the temple, the kingdom, the priesthood; and whatsoever was ordained in Sina by the mother, which is the law, the same is done in Jerusalem. Therefore I join her with Sina, and I comprehend both in one word, to wit, Sina or Agar.

I durst not have been so bold to handle this allegory after this manner, but would rather have called Jerusalem Sarah or the New Testament, especially seeing the preaching of the gospel began in it, the Holy Ghost was there given, and the people of the New Testament were there born; and I would have thought that I had found out a very fit allegory. Wherefore it is not for every man to use allegories at his pleasure: for a goodly outward shew may soon deceive a man, and cause him to err. Who would not think it a very fit thing to call Sina Agar, and Jerusalem Sarah? Indeed Paul maketh Jerusalem Sarah, but not this corporal Jerusalem, which he simply joineth unto Agar; but that spiritual and heavenly Jerusalem, in which the law reigneth not, nor the carnal people, as in

that Jerusalem which is in bondage with her children, but wherein the promise reigneth, wherein is also a spiritual and a free people.

And to the end that the law should be quite abolished, and that whole kingdom which was established in Agar, the earthly Jerusalem was horribly destroyed, with all her ornaments, the temple, the ceremonies, &c. Now although the New Testament began in it, and so was spread throughout the whole word, yet notwithstanding it appertaineth to Agar; that is to say, it is the city of the law, of the ceremonies, and of the priesthood, instituted by Moses. Briefly, it is gendered of Agar the bond-woman, and therefore is in bondage with her children; that is to say, it walketh in the works of the law, and never attaineth to the liberty of the spirit, but abideth continually under the law, sin, an evil conscience, the wrath and judgment of God, and under the guilt of death and hell. Indeed it hath the liberty of the flesh, it hath a corporal kingdom, it hath magistrates, riches, and possessions, and such like things: but we speak of the liberty of the spirit, whereby we are dead to the law, to sin, and death, and we live and reign in grace, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and everlasting life. This cannot the earthly Jerusalem perform, and therefore it abideth with Agar.

Verse 26. But Jerusalem, which is above, is free; which is the mother of us all.

That earthly Jerusalem (saith he), which is beneath, having the policy and ordinances of the law, is Agar, and is in bondage with her children; that is to say, she is not delivered from the law, sin, and death. But Jerusalem which is above, that is to say, the spiritual Jerusalem, is Sarah (albeit Paul addeth not the proper name of Sarah, but giveth her another name, calling her the free woman); that is to say, that true lady and free woman which is the mother of us all, gendering us unto liberty, and not unto bondage, as Agar doth. Now this heavenly Jerusalem, which is above, is the church, that is to say, the faithful dispersed throughout the whole world, which have one and the same gospel, one and the same faith in Christ, the same Holy Ghost, and the same sacraments.

Therefore, understand not this word above of the tri-

umphant church (as the schoolmen call it) in heaven; but of the militant church on earth. For the godly are said to have their conversation in heaven—Our conversation is in heaven (Phil. iii.), not locally, but in that a Christian believeth, in that he layeth hold of those inestimable, those heavenly and eternal gifts, he is in heaven—Which hath blessed us with all spiritual blessing in heavenly things in Christ (Eph. i.). We must therefore distinguish the heavenly and spiritual blessing from the earthly. For the earthly blessing is to have a good civil government both in common-weals and families; to have children, peace, riches, fruits of the earth, and other corporal commodities. But the heavenly blessing is to be delivered from the law, sin, and death; to be justified and quickened to life; to have peace with God; to have a faithful heart, a joyful conscience, and a spiritual consolation; to have the knowledge of Jesus Christ; to have the gift of prophesy, and the revelation of the scriptures; to have the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and to rejoice in God. These are the heavenly blessings which Christ giveth to his church.

Wherefore Jerusalem which is above, that is to say, the heavenly Jerusalem, is the church which is now in the world, and not the city of the life to come, or the church triumphant, as the idle and unlearned monks and the school doctors dreamed, which taught that the scripture hath four senses; the literal sense, the figurative sense, the allegorical sense, and the moral sense; and according to these senses they have foolishly interpreted almost all the words of the scriptures. As this word Jerusalem literally signified that city which was so named, figuratively a pure conscience; allegorically the church militant; morally, the celestial city, or the church triumphant. With these trifling and foolish fables, they rent the scriptures into so many and diverse senses, that silly poor consciences could receive no certain doctrine of any thing. But Paul saith here, that the old and earthly Jerusalem belongeth unto Agar, and that it is in bondage with her children, and is utterly abolished. But the new and heavenly Jerusalem, which is a queen and a free woman, is appointed of God in earth and not in heaven, to be the mother of us all, of whom we have been gendered, and yet daily are gendered. Therefore it is necessary that this our mother should be in earth

among men, as also her generation is. Notwithstanding she gendereth by the Holy Ghost, by the ministry of the words and sacraments, and not in the flesh.

This I say to the end that in this matter we should not be carried away with our cogitations into heaven, but that we should know that Paul setteth the Jerusalem which is above against the earthly Jerusalem, not locally but spiritually. For there is a distinction between those things which are spiritual, and those which are corporal or earthly. The spiritual things are above, the earthly are beneath: so Jerusalem, which is above, is distinguished from the carnal and temporal Jerusalem, which is beneath, not locally (as I have said), but spiritually. For this spiritual Jerusalem, which took her beginning in the corporal Jerusalem, hath not any certain place, as hath the other in Judea; but it is dispersed throughout the whole world, and may be in Babylon, in Turkey, in Tartary, in Scithia, in Judea, in Italy, in Germany, in the Isles of the Sea, in the mountains and vallies, and in all places of the world where men dwell which have the gospel and believe in Jesus Christ.

Wherefore Sarah, or Jerusalem, our free mother, is the church itself, the spouse of Christ, of whom we all are gendered. This mother gendereth free children without ceasing to the end of the world, as long as she exerciseth the ministry of the word, that is to say, as long as she preacheth and publisheth the gospel: for this is truly to gender. Now, she teacheth the gospel after this manner; to wit, that we are delivered from the curse of the law, from sin, death, and all other evils by Jesus Christ, and not by the law, neither by works. Therefore Jerusalem which is above, that is to say, the church, is not subject to the law and works, but she is free, and a mother, without the law, sin, and death. Now, such a mother as she is, such children she gendereth.

This allegory teacheth very aptly, that the church should do nothing else but preach and teach the gospel truly and sincerely, and by this means should gender children. So we are all fathers and children one to another, for we are begotten one of another. I, being begotten of other through the gospel, do now beget other, which shall also beget other hereafter, and so this begetting shall endure to the end of the world. Now I speak of the generation, not of Agar the bond-maid, which gendereth her bond-

servants by the law; but of Sarah the free-woman, who gendereth heirs without the law, and without man's works or endeavours. For in that Isaac is heir, and not Ishmael (albeit notwithstanding that both of them were the natural sons of Abraham); Isaac had the inheritance by the word of promise, namely, Sarah thy wife shall bring thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac (Gen. xvii. 19.). This did Sarah well understand, and therefore she saith, Cast out the bond-woman and her son: and Paul also allegeth these words afterwards. Wherefore, as Isaac hath the inheritance of his father only by the promise and by his birth, without the law and without works; even so we are born through the gospel of that free woman Sarah, that is to say, the church, true heirs of the promise. She instructeth us, nourisheth us, and carrieth us in her womb, in her lap, and in her arms; she formeth and fashioneth us to the image of Christ, until we grow up to a perfect man, &c. So all things are done by the ministry of the word. Wherefore the office of the free-woman is to gender children to God her husband without ceasing and without end: that is to say, such children as know that they are justified by faith and not by the law.

Verse 27. For it is written (Isaiah liv. 1.); Rejoice thou barren that bearest no children: break forth and cry thou that travailest not, for the desolate hath many more children than she that hath an husband.

Paul allegeth this place out of Isaiah the prophet, which is altogether allegorical. It is written (saith he), that the mother of many children, and she which hath an husband, must be sick and die: and contrariwise, that the barren, and she that hath no children, must have abundance of children. After the same manner, Hannah signifieth in her song, out of the which Isaiah the prophet took his prophesy (1 Sam. ii), The bow and the mighty men are broken, and the weak have girded themselves with strength. They that were full are hired forth for bread, and the hungry are no more hired; so that the barren hath borne seven, and she that had many children is feeble. A marvellous matter (saith he): she that was fruitful shall be made barren, and she that was barren fruitful. Moreover, such as before were strong, full, rich, glorious,

righteous, and blessed, shall become feeble, hungry, poor, ignominious sinners, subject to death and damnation; and contrariwise, the feeble and hungry, &c. shall be strong and satisfied, &c.

The apostle sheweth by this allegory of the prophet Isaiah, the difference which is between Agar and Sarah, that is to say, between the synagogue and the church, or between the law and the gospel. The law being the husband of the fruitful woman, that is to say, of the synagogue, begetting very many children. For men of all ages, not only ideots, but also the wisest and best (that is to say, all mankind except the children of the free-woman) do neither see nor know any other righteousness than the righteousness of the law; much less do they know any which is more excellent: wherefore they think themselves righteous if they follow the law, and outwardly perform the works thereof.

These, although they be fruitful, have many disciples, and shine in the righteousness and glorious works of the law, yet notwithstanding are not free but bond-servants; for they are the children of Agar, which gendereth to bondage. Now if they be servants, they cannot be partakers of the inheritance, but shall be cast out of the house; for servants remain not in the house for ever (John viii. 35.). Yea they are already cast out of the kingdom of grace and liberty: For he that believeth not is condemned already (John iii. 18.). They remain therefore under the malediction of the law, under sin and death, under the power of the devil, and under the wrath and judgment of God.

Now, if the moral law itself, or the ten commandments of God, can do nothing else but gender servants; that is to say, cannot justify, but only terrify, accuse, condemn, and drive men's consciences to desperation; how then, I pray you, shall the laws of men, or the laws of the Pope, justify, which are the doctrines of devils? They therefore that teach and set forth either the traditions of men, or the law of God, as necessary to obtain righteousness before God, do nothing else but gender servants. Notwithstanding, such teachers are counted the best men: they obtain the favour of the world, and are most fruitful mothers, for they have an infinite number of disciples. For man's reason understandeth not what faith and true godliness is, and therefore it neglecteth and despiseth it,

and is naturally addicted to superstition and hypocrisy, that is to say, to the righteousness of works. Now, because this righteousness shineth and flourisheth every where, therefore it is a mighty empress of the whole world. They, therefore, which teach the righteousness of works by the law, beget many children, which outwardly seem to be free, and have a glorious shew of excellent virtues, but in conscience they are servants and bond-slaves of sin: therefore they are to be cast out of the house, and condemned.

Contrariwise, Sarah the free-woman, that is to say, the true church, seemeth to be barren. For the gospel, which is the word of the cross and affliction, which the church preacheth, shineth not so brightly as the doctrine of the law and works, and therefore she hath not so many disciples to cleave unto her. Moreover, she beareth this title, that she forbiddeth good works, maketh men secure, idle, and negligent, raiseth up heresies, and seditions, and is the cause of all mischief; and therefore she seemeth to bring no success or prosperity, but all things seem to be full of barrenness, desolation, and desperation. Therefore the wicked are certainly persuaded, that the church with her doctrine cannot long endure. The Jews assured themselves, that the church which was planted by the apostles should be overthrown; the which by an odious name they called a sect. For thus they speak to Paul in the 28th chapter of the Acts: As concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against. In like manner, how often (I pray you) have our adversaries been deceived, which some-whiles appointed one time, and some-whiles another, when we should be certainly destroyed? Christ and his apostles were oppressed: but after their death the doctrine of the gospel was further spread abroad than it was during their life. In like manner, our adversaries may oppress us at this day, but the word of God shall abide for ever. How much soever then the church seemeth to be barren and forsaken, weak, and despised, and outwardly to suffer persecution, and moreover be compelled to hear this reproach, that her doctrine is heretical and seditious; notwithstanding she alone is fruitful before God; she gendereth by the ministry of the word an infinite number of children, heirs of righteousness and everlasting life: and, although outwardly they suffer persecution, yet in spirit they are most

free; who not only are judges over all doctrines and works, but also are most victorious conquerors against the gates of hell.

The prophet therefore confesseth that the church is in heaviness; for else he would not exhort her to rejoice. He granteth that she is barren before the world; for else he would not call her barren and forsaken, having no children: but before God, saith he, she is fruitful, and therefore he biddeth her to rejoice. As though he would say: Thou art indeed forsaken and barren, and hast not the law for thy husband, and therefore thou hast no children. But rejoice: for although thou hast not the law for thy husband, but art forsaken as a virgin that is ready to marry (for he will not call her widow), which should have an husband if she were not forsaken of him, or if he were not slain; thou (I say) which art solitary and forsaken of thy husband the law, and not subject to the marriage of the law, shalt be a mother of innumerable children. Wherefore the people, or the church of the New Testament, is altogether without the law as touching the conscience, and therefore she seemeth to be forsaken in the sight of the world. But although she seem to be never so barren without the law and without works, yet notwithstanding she is most fruitful before God, and bringeth forth an infinite number of children, not in bondage but in freedom. By what means? Not by the law, but by the word and spirit of Christ, which is given by the gospel, through the which she conceiveth, bringeth forth, and nourisheth her children.

Paul therefore plainly sheweth by this allegory the difference between the law and the gospel: first, when he calleth Agar the Old Testament and Sarah the New; again, when he calleth the one a bond-maid, the other a free-woman: moreover, when he saith that the married and fruitful is become barren, and cast out of the house with her children; contrariwise, when the barren and forsaken is become fruitful, and bringeth forth an infinite number of children, and those also inheritors. By these differences are resembled the two sorts of people, of faith and of the law I mean. The people of faith have not the law for their husband, they serve not in bondage, they are not born of that mother Jerusalem which now is; but they have the promise, they are free, and are born of free Sarah.

He separateth therefore the spiritual people of the New Testament, from the other people of the law; when he saith that the spiritual people are not the children of Agar the bond-maid, but of Sarah the free-woman, which knoweth nothing of the law. And by this means he placeth the people of faith far above and without the law. Now then, if they be above and without the law, then are they justified by the spiritual birth only, which is nothing else but faith; and not by the law or by the works thereof. Now, as the people of grace neither have nor can have the law; so the people of the law neither have nor can have grace; for it is impossible that the law and grace should stand together. Therefore we must be justified by faith, and lose the righteousness of the law; or else be justified by the law, and lose the righteousness of faith. But this is a foul and a lamentable loss, to lose grace and to return to the law. Contrariwise, it is an happy and blessed loss, to lose the law, and lay hold of grace.

We, therefore (following the example and diligence of Paul). do endeavour, as much as is possible, to set forth plainly the difference between the law and the gospel, which is very easy as touching the words. For who seeth not that Agar is not Sarah, and that Sarah is not Agar? Also, that Ishmael is not Isaac, and that he hath not that which Isaac hath? A man may easily discern these things. But in great terrors and in the agony of death, when the conscience wrestleth with the judgment of God, it is the hardest thing of all others to say with a sure and stedfast hope: I am not the son of Agar, but of Sarah; that is to say, the law becometh nothing unto me, for Sarah is my mother, who bringeth forth free children and heirs, and not servants.

Paul then, by this testimony of Isaiah, hath proved that Sarah, that is to say, the church, is the true mother, which bringeth forth free-children and heirs: contrariwise, that Agar, that is to say, the synagogue, gendereth many children indeed, but they are servants, and must be cast out. Moreover, because this place speaketh also of the abolishing of the law and of Christian liberty, it ought to be diligently considered. For as it is the most principal and special article of Christian doctrine, to know that we are justified and saved by Christ, so it is also very necessary to know and understand well the doctrine con-

cerning the abolishment of the law. For it helpeth very much to confirm our doctrine as touching faith, and to attain sound and certain consolation of conscience, when we are assured that the law is abolished, and specially in great terrors and serious conflicts.

I have often said before, and now I say again (for it cannot be too often repeated) that a Christian laying hold of the benefit of Christ through faith hath no law, but all the law is to him abolished with all his terrors and torments. This place of Isaiah teacheth the same thing, and therefore it is very notable and full of comfort, stirring up the barren and forsaken to rejoice, which was counted worthy to be mocked or pitied according to the law. For such as were barren were accursed according to the law. But the Holy Ghost turneth this sentence, and pronounceth the barren worthy of praise and blessing; and contrariwise, the fruitful and such as bring forth children, accursed; when he saith: Rejoice thou barren, which bearest not; break forth into joy, and rejoice thou that travailest not; for the desolate hath many more children than the married wife (Isaiah liv. 1.). Howsoever then Sarah, that is to say, the church, seemeth to be forsaken and barren before the world, not having the righteousness and works of the law; yet notwithstanding she is a most fruitful mother, having an infinite number of children before God, as the prophet witnesseth. Contrariwise, although Agar seem never so fruitful, and to bring forth never so many children, yet notwithstanding she hath no issue remaining; for the children of the bond-woman are cast out of the house together with their mother, and receive not the inheritance with the children of the free-woman; as Paul saith afterwards.

Because therefore we are the children of the free-woman, the law our old husband is abolished (Rom. vii.), who as long as he had dominion over us, it was impossible for us to bring forth children free in spirit, or knowing grace, but we remained with the other in bondage. True it is, that as long as the law reigneth, men are not idle, but they labour sore, they bear the burthen and the heat of the day (Matt. xx. 22.), they bring forth and gender many children; but as well the fathers as the children are bastards, and do not belong to the free-mother; therefore they are at the length cast out of the house and inheritance with Ishmael; they die and are damned. It is impossible

therefore that men should attain to the inheritance; that is to say, that they should be justified and saved by the law, although they travel never so much, and be never so fruitful therein. Accursed therefore be that doctrine, life, and religion, which endeavoureth to get righteousness before God by the law or the works thereof. But let us prosecute our purpose as touching the abolishment of the law.

The school-doctors, speaking of the abolishment of the law, say that the judicial and the ceremonial laws are pernicious and deadly since the coming of Christ, and therefore they are abolished, but not the moral law. These blind doctors knew not what they said. But if thou wilt speak of the abolishment of the law, talk of it as it is in its own proper use and office, and as it is spiritually taken, and comprehend withal the whole law, making no distinction at all between the judicial, ceremonial, and moral law. For when Paul saith, that we are delivered from the curse of the law by Christ, he speaketh of the whole law, and principally of the moral law, which only accuseth, curseth, and condemneth the conscience, which the other two do not. Wherefore we say that the moral law, or the law of the ten commandments hath no power to accuse and terrify the conscience, in which Jesus Christ reigneth by his grace, for he hath abolished the power thereof.

Not that the conscience doth not at all feel the terrors of the law (for indeed it feeleth them), but that they cannot condemn it nor bring it to desperation. For there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus (Rom. vii.). Also: If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed (John viii.). Howsoever then a Christian man be terrified through the law shewing unto him his sin, notwithstanding he despaireth not. For he believeth in Jesus Christ, and being baptized in him and cleansed by his blood, he hath remission of all his sins. Now, when our sin is pardoned through Christ, who is the Lord of the law (and yet is so pardoned that he gave himself for it), the law being a servant hath no more power to accuse and condemn us for sin, seeing it is forgiven us, and we are now made free, forasmuch as the Son hath delivered us from bondage. Wherefore the law is wholly abolished to them that believe in Christ.

But thou wilt say, I do nothing. True it is that thou canst do nothing, whereby thou mayest be delivered from the tyranny of the law. But hear this joyful tidings which the Holy Ghost bringeth unto thee out of the words of the prophet: Rejoice thou that art barren, &c. As if he would say: Why art thou so heavy? why dost thou so mourn, since there is no cause why thou shouldest so do? But I am barren and forsaken. Well: although thou be never so barren and forsaken, not having the righteousness of the law, notwithstanding Christ is thy righteousness: he was made a curse for thee, to deliver thee from the curse of the law. If thou believe in him, the law is dead unto thee. And look how much Christ is greater than the law, so much hast thou a more excellent righteousness than the righteousness of the law. Moreover, thou art fruitful and not barren; for thou hast many more children than she which hath an husband.

There is also another abolishment of the law which is outward; to wit, that the politic laws of Moses do nothing belong unto us. Wherefore we ought not to call them back again, nor superstitiously bind ourselves unto them: as some went about to do in times past, being ignorant of this liberty. Now, although the gospel make us not subject to the judicial laws of Moses, yet notwithstanding it doth not exempt us from the obedience of all politic laws, but maketh us subject in this corporal life to the laws of that government wherein we live: that is to say, it commandeth every one to obey his magistrate and laws, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience sake (1 Pet. ii. Rom. xiii). And the emperor, or any other prince should not offend, if he used some of the judicial laws of Moses: yea he might use them freely and without offence. Therefore the Popish schoolmen are deceived, which dream that the judicial laws of Moses are pernicious and deadly since the coming of Christ.

Likewise we are not bound to the ceremonies of Moses; much less to the ceremonies of the Pope. But because this bodily life cannot be altogether without ceremonies (for there must needs be some introduction), therefore the gospel suffereth ordinances to be made in the church as touching days, times, places, &c. that the people may know upon what day, in what hour, and in what place to assemble together to hear the word of God. It permitteth also that lessons and readings should be appointed, as in

the schools, especially for the instruction of children and such as are ignorant. These things it permitteth to the end that all may be done comely and orderly in the church (1 Cor. xiv.). Not that they which keep such ordinances do thereby merit remission of sins. Moreover they may be changed or omitted without sin, so that it be done without offence of the weak.

Now, Paul speaketh here especially of the abolishment of the moral law; which is diligently to be considered. For he speaketh against the righteousness of the law, that he might establish the righteousness of faith, concluding thus: If only grace or faith in Christ justify, then is the whole law abolished without any exception. And this he confirmeth by the testimony of Isaiah, whereby he exhorteth the barren and forsaken to rejoice; for it seemeth that she hath no child, nor hope ever to have any; that is to say, she hath no disciples, no favour nor countenance of the world, because she preacheth the word of the cross of Christ crucified, against all the wisdom of the flesh. But thou that art barren (saith the prophet) let not this any whit trouble thee: yea, rather lift up thy voice and rejoice, for she that is forsaken hath more children than she that hath an husband; that is to say, she that is married, and hath a number of children, shall be made weak, and she that is forsaken shall have many children.

He calleth the church barren, because her children are not begotten by the law, by works, by any industry or endeavour of man; but by the word of faith in the spirit of God. Here is nothing else but birth; no working at all. Contrariwise, they that are fruitful, labour and exercise themselves with great travel in bearing and bringing forth. Here is altogether working, and no birth. But because they endeavour to get the right of children and heirs by the righteousness of the law, or by their own righteousness, they are servants, and never receive the inheritance, no, though they tire themselves to death with continual travel. For they go about to obtain that by their own works against the will of God, which God of his mere grace will give to all believers for Christ's sake. The faithful work well also; but they are not thereby made sons and heirs (for this their birth bringeth unto them). But this they do to the end that they, being now made children and heirs, might glorify God by their good works, and help their neighbours.

Verse 28. *Therefore, brethren, we are after the manner of Isaac, children of the promise.*

That is to say, We are not children of the flesh, as Ishmael, or as all the fleshly Israel, which gloried that they were the seed of Abraham and the people of God. But Christ answered them (John viii.): If ye were the sons of Abraham, ye would not seek to kill me, which speak the truth unto you. Also: If God were your father, then would ye love me and receive my word. As if he would say: Brethren, born and brought up together in one house, know one another's voice: But ye be of your father the devil, &c. We are not such children (saith he) as they are, which remain servants, and at length shall be cast out of the house. But we are children of the promise, as Isaac was; that is to say, of grace and of faith, born only of the promise. Concerning this I have spoken sufficiently before in the third chapter, in treating upon this place: In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Therefore we are pronounced righteous, not by the law, by works, or our own righteousness, but by the mere mercy and grace of God. Paul repeateth very often, and diligently setteth forth the promise which is received by faith alone; for he knew that it was very necessary so to do.

Hitherto as touching the allegory out of Genesis; to the which Paul annexeth the place of Isaiah as an interpretation. Now he applieth the history of Ishmael and Isaac for our example and consolation.

Verse 29. *But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now.*

This place containeth a singular consolation. Whosoever are born and live in Christ, and rejoyce in this birth and inheritance of God, have Ishmael for their enemy and their persecutor. This we learn at this day by experience; for we see that all the world is full of tumults, persecutions, sects, and offences. Wherefore, if we did not arm ourselves with this consolation of Paul, and such like, and well understand this article of justification, we should never be able to withstand the violence and subtil

slights of Satan. For who should not be troubled with these cruel persecutions of our adversaries, and with these sects and infinite offences, which a sort of busy and fantastical spirits stir up at this day? Verily it is no small grief unto us, when we are constrained to hear that all things were in peace and tranquillity before the gospel came abroad; but since the preaching and publishing thereof, all things are unquiet, and the whole world is in an uproar, so that every one armeth himself against another. When a man that is not endued with the spirit of God heareth this, by-and-by he is offended, and judgeth that the disobedience of subjects against their magistrates; that seditions, wars, plagues, and famine; that the overthrowing of common-weals, kingdoms, and countries; that sects, offences, and such other infinite evils, do proceed altogether of the doctrine of the gospel.

Against this great offence we must comfort and arm ourselves with this sweet consolation, that the faithful must bear this name and this title in the world; that they are seditious and schismatics, and the authors of innumerable evils. And hereof it cometh that our adversaries think they have a just cause against us, yea that they do God high service, when they hate, persecute, and kill us (John xvi. 2.). It cannot be then but that Ishmael must persecute Isaac; but Isaac again persecuteth not Ishmael. Whoso will not suffer the persecution of Ishmael, let him not profess himself to be a Christian.

But let our adversaries (which so mightily amplify these evils at this day) tell us what good things ensued the preaching of the gospel of Christ and his apostles. Did not the destruction of the kingdom of the Jews follow? was not the Roman empire overthrown? was not the whole world in an uproar? and yet the gospel was not the cause hereof, which Christ and his apostles preached for the profit and salvation of men, and not for their destruction. But these things followed through the iniquity of the people, the nations, the kings and princes, who being possessed of the devil, would not hearken to the word of grace, life, and eternal salvation; but detested and condemned it as a doctrine most pernicious and hurtful to religion and common-weals. And that this should so come to pass, the Holy Ghost foretold by David, when he saith (Psalm ii.), Why do the heathen rage, and the people murmur in vain? &c.

Such tumults and hurly-burlies we hear and see at this day. The adversaries lay the fault in our doctrine. But the doctrine of grace and peace stirreth not up these troubles; but the people, nations, kings and princes of the earth (as the Psalmist saith), rage and murmur, conspire and take counsel, not against us (as they think), nor against our doctrine, which they blaspheme as false and seditious; but against the Lord and his Anointed. Therefore all their counsels and practices are and shall be disappointed and brought to nought: He that dwelleth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision (Psalm ii. 4.). Let them cry out therefore as long as they list, that we raise up these tumults and seditions: notwithstanding this psalm comforteth us, and saith that they themselves are the authors of these troubles. They cannot believe this, and much less can they believe that it is they which murmur, rise up, and take counsel against the Lord and his Anointed: nay, rather they think that they maintain the Lord's cause, that they defend his glory, and do him acceptable service in persecuting us: but the psalm lieth not, and that shall the end declare. Here we do nothing, but we only suffer, as our conscience beareth us witness in the Holy Ghost. Moreover, the doctrine for the which they raise up such tumults and offences, is not ours, but it is the doctrine of Christ. This doctrine we cannot deny, nor forsake the defence thereof, seeing Christ saith, Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful nation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall come in his glory, and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels (Luke ix. 26.).

He therefore that will preach the gospel truly, and confess him to be our righteousness, must be content to hear that he is a pernicious fellow, and that he troubleth all things. They which have troubled the world (said the Jews of Paul and Silas) are also come unto us, and have done contrary to the decrees of Cæsar (Acts xvii.). And in the 24th of the Acts, We have found this pestilent fellow stirring up sedition among all the Jews throughout the whole world, and the author of the sect of Nazarites, &c. In like manner also the Gentiles complain in the 16th of the Acts,—These men trouble our city. So, at this day, they accuse Luther to be a troubler of the papacy and of the Roman empire. If I would keep silence,

then all things should be in peace which the strong man possesseth (Luke xi. 21, 22.), and the Pope would not persecute me any more. But by this means the gospel of Jesus Christ should be blemished and defaced. If I speak, the Pope is troubled, and cruelly rageth. Either we must lose the Pope, an earthly and mortal man, or else the immortal God, Christ Jesus, life, and eternal salvation. Let the Pope perish then, and let God be exalted; let Christ reign and triumph for ever.

Christ himself, when he foresaw in spirit the great troubles which should follow his preaching, comforted himself after this manner: I come (saith he) to send fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled? (Luke xii. 49.) In like manner we see, at this day, that great troubles follow the preaching of the gospel, through the persecution and blasphemy of our adversaries, and the ingratitude of the world. This matter so grieveh us, that oftentimes, after the flesh and after the judgment of reason, we think it had been better that the doctrine of the gospel had not been published, than that, after the preaching thereof, the public peace should be so troubled. But, according to the spirit, we say boldly with Christ, I come to send fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it shall now be kindled? Now, after that this fire is kindled, there follow forthwith great commotions. For it is not a king or an emperor that is thus provoked; but the god of this world, which is a most mighty spirit, and the lord of the whole world. This weak word, preaching Christ crucified, setteth upon this mighty and terrible adversary. Behemoth, feeling the divine power of this word, stirreth up all his members, shaketh his tail, and maketh the depth of the sea to boil like a pot (Job xli.). Hereof come all these tumults, all these furious and cruel rages of the world.

Wherefore let it not trouble us, that our adversaries are offended and cry out, that there cometh no good by the preaching of the gospel. They are infidels, they are blind and obstinate, and therefore it is impossible that they should see any fruit of the gospel. But contrariwise, we which believe do see the inestimable profits and fruits thereof; although outwardly, for a time, we be oppressed with infinite evils, despised, spoiled, accused, condemned as the outcast and filthy dung of the whole world, and put to death, and inwardly afflicted with the

feeling of our sin, and vexed with devils. For we live in Christ, in whom and by whom we are made kings and lords over sin, death, the flesh, the world, hell, and all evils. In whom and by whom also we tread under our feet that dragon and basilisk, which is the king of sin and death. How is this done? In faith. For the blessedness which we hope for is not yet revealed, which in the mean time we wait for in patience, and yet notwithstanding do now assuredly possess the same by faith.

We ought therefore diligently to learn the article of justification; for that only is able to support us against these infinite slanders and offences, and to comfort us in all our temptations and persecutions. For we see that it cannot otherwise be, but that the world will be offended with the pure doctrine of the gospel, and continually cry out that no good cometh of it. For the natural man understandeth not those things which are of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him (1 Cor. ii. 14.). He only beholdeth the outward evils, troubles, rebellions, murders, sects, and other such like things. With these sights he is offended and blinded, and finally falleth into the contempt and blaspheming of God and his word.

On the contrary part, we ought to stay and comfort ourselves in this, that our adversaries do not accuse and condemn us for any manifest wickedness which we have committed, as adultery, murder, theft, and such like, but for our doctrine. And what do we teach? That Christ the Son of God, by the death of the cross, hath redeemed us from our sins and from everlasting death. Therefore they do not impugn our life, but our doctrine; yea the doctrine of Christ, and not ours. Therefore, if there be any offence, it is Christ's offence, and not ours; and so the fault wherefore they persecute us, Christ has committed, and not we. Now, whether they will condemn Christ, and pluck him out of heaven as an heretic and seditious person for this fault, that he is our only justifier and saviour, let them look to that. As for us, we commending this his own cause unto himself, are quiet beholders whether of them shall have the victory, Christ or they. Indeed, after the flesh, it grieveth us that these Ishmaelites hate and persecute us so furiously; notwithstanding, according to the spirit, we glory in these afflictions, both because we know that we suffer them not for our sins, but for Christ's cause, whose benefit

and whose glory we set forth, and also because Paul giveth us warning aforehand, that Ishmael must mock Isaac, and persecute him.

The Jews expound this place, which Paul allegeth out of the 21st of Genesis, of Ishmael mocking and persecuting Isaac after this manner, that Ishmael constrained Isaac to commit idolatry. If he did so, yet I believe not that it was any such gross idolatry as the Jews dream of, to wit, that Ishmael made images of clay, after the manner of the Gentiles, which he compelled Isaac to worship: for this Abraham would in no wise have suffered. But I think that Ishmael was in outward shew a holy man, as Cain was, who also persecuted his brother, and at length killed him; not for any corporal thing, but because he saw that God esteemed him above the other. In like manner, Ishmael was outwardly a lover of religion: he sacrificed, and exercised himself in well-doing. Therefore he mocked his brother Isaac, and would be esteemed a better man than he for two causes: first, for his religion and service of God; secondly, for his civil government and inheritance. And these two things he seemed justly to challenge himself. For he thought that the kingdom and priesthood pertained to him by the right of God's law as the first-born, and therefore he persecuted Isaac spiritually because of religion, and corporally because of his inheritance.

This persecution always remaineth in the church, especially when the doctrine of the gospel flourisheth, to wit, that the children of the flesh mock the children of the promise, and persecute them. The Papists persecute us at this day, and for none other cause, but for that we teach that righteousness cometh by the promise. For it vexeth the Papists that we will not worship their idols, that is to say, that we set not forth their righteousness, their works and worshippings, devised and ordained by men, as available to obtain grace and forgiveness of sins. And for this cause they go about to cast us out of the house, that is to say, they vaunt that they are the church, the children and people of God, and that the inheritance belongeth unto them, &c. Contrariwise, they excommunicate and banish us as heretics and seditious persons; and, if they can, they kill us also; and in so doing they think they do God good service. So, as much as in them lieth, they cast us out of this life and of the life to come.

The Anabaptists, and such other, do hate us deadly, because we impugn and detest their errors and heresies, which they spread abroad and daily renew in the church, and for this cause they judge us to be far worse than the Papists, and therefore they have conceived a more cruel hatred against us than against the Papists.

As soon, therefore, as the word of God is brought to light, the devil is angry, and useth all his force and subtilties to persecute it, and utterly to abolish it. Therefore he can no otherwise do, but raise infinite sects, horrible offences, cruel persecutions, and abominable murders; for he is the father of lying and of murder. He spreadeth his lies throughout the world by false teachers, and he killeth men by tyrants. By these means he possesseth both the spiritual and the corporal kingdom; the spiritual kingdom by the lying of false teachers (stirring up also without ceasing every man particular by his fiery darts to heresies and wicked opinions); the corporal kingdom by the sword of tyrants. Thus this father of lying and of murder stirreth up persecution on every side, both spiritual and corporal, against the children of the free woman. The spiritual persecution, which we are at this day constrained to suffer of heretics, is to us most grievous and intolerable, because of the infinite offences and slanders wherewith the devil goeth about to deface our doctrine. For we are enforced to hear, that the heresies and errors of the Anabaptists and other heretics, and all other enormities do proceed from our doctrine. The corporal persecution, by which tyrants lie in wait for our goods and lives, is more tolerable; for they persecute us not for our sins, but for the testimony of the word of God. Let us learn therefore even by the title which Christ giveth to the devil, to wit, that he is the father of lying and murder (John viii.), that when the gospel flourisheth and Christ reigneth, then sects of perdition must needs spring up, and murderers, persecuting the gospel, must rage every where. And Paul saith, That there must be heresies (1 Cor. xi. 19.). He that is ignorant of this, is soon offended, and falling away from the true God and true faith, he returneth to his old god and old false faith.

Paul therefore in this place armeth the godly beforehand, that they should not be offended with those persecutions, sects, and offences, saying, But as then he that

was born after the flesh, &c. As if he would say, If we be the children of the promise, and born after the spirit, we must surely look to be persecuted of our brother, which is born after the flesh; that is to say, not only our enemies, which are manifestly wicked, shall persecute us, but also such as at the first were our dear friends, with whom we were familiarly conversant in one house, which received from us the true doctrine of the gospel, shall become our deadly enemies, and persecute us extremely. For they are brethren after the flesh, and must persecute the brethren which are born after the spirit. So Christ (in Psalm xli.) complaineth of Judas: The man of my peace, whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up the heel against me. But this is our consolation, that we have not given any occasion to our Ishmaelites to persecute us. The Papists persecute us because we teach the pure and sincere doctrine of the gospel; which, if we would forsake, they would persecute us no more. Moreover, if we would approve the pernicious heresies of the sectaries, they would praise us. But, because we detest and abhor the impiety both of the one and the other, therefore do they so spitefully hate and so cruelly persecute us.

But not only Paul (as I have said) armeth us against such persecutions and offences, but Christ himself also most sweetly comforteth us in the 15th chapter of John, saying, If ye were of the world, the world would love you; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. As if he would say, I am the cause of all these persecutions which ye endure; and if ye be killed, it is for whose sake ye are killed. For if ye did not preach my word, and confess me, the world would not persecute you. But it goeth well with you: For the servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you for my name's sake. (John v. 20.).

By these words Christ layeth all the fault upon himself, and delivereth us from all fear. As if he would say, Ye are not the cause why the world hateth and persecuteth you, but my name, which ye preach and confess, is the cause thereof. But be of good comfort, I have overcome the world. This comfort upholdeth us, so that we doubt nothing but that Christ is strong enough, not only

to bear, but also to vanquish all the cruelty of tyrants, and the subtil slights of heretics. And this he hath declared in shewing forth his power against the Jews and Romans, whose tyranny and persecutions he suffered for a time. He also suffered the subtil and crafty practices of heretics, but in time and place he overthrew them all, and remained king and conqueror. Let the Papists then rage as much as they will; let the sectaries slander and corrupt the gospel of Christ as much as they can; notwithstanding Christ shall reign eternally, and his word shall stand for ever, when all his enemies shall be brought to nought. Moreover, this is a singular consolation, that the persecution of Ishmael against Isaac shall not always continue, but shall endure for a little while, and when that is ended, the sentence shall be pronounced as followeth:

Verse 30. But what saith the scripture? Cast out the servant and her son: for the son of the servant shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman. (Gen. xxi. 10.)

This word of Sarah was very grievous to Abraham: and, no doubt, when he heard this sentence, his fatherly bowels were moved with compassion towards his son Ishmael; for he was born of his flesh. And this the scripture plainly witnesseth, when it saith, And this thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight, because of his son. But God confirmeth the sentence which Sarah pronounced, saying to Abraham: Let it not be grievous in thy sight for the child and for thy bond woman; in all that Sarah shall say unto thee, hear her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

The Ishmaelites hear in this place the sentence pronounced against them, which overthroweth the Jews, Grecians, Romans, and all others which persecute the church of Christ. The self-same sentence also shall overthrow the Papists, and as many as trust in their own works, which at this day boast themselves to be the people of God and the church; which also trust that they shall surely receive the inheritance, and judge us which rest upon the promise of God, not only to be barren and forsaken, but also heretics cast out of the church, and that it is impossible that we should be sons and heirs. But God overthroweth their judgment, and

pronounceth this sentence against them, that because they are the children of the bond-woman, and persecute the children of the free-woman: therefore they shall be cast out of the house, and shall have no inheritance with the children of promise; to whom only the inheritance belongeth, because they are the children of the free-woman. This sentence is ratified, and can never be revoked: wherefore it shall assuredly come to pass, that our Ishmaelites shall not only loose the ecclesiastical and politic government which now they have, but also everlasting life: For the scripture hath foretold, that the children of the bond-woman shall be cast out of the house, that is to say, out of the kingdom of grace; for they cannot be heirs together with the children of the free-woman.

Now, here is to be noted, that the Holy Ghost calleth the people of the law and works, as it were in contempt, the child of the bond-woman. As if he said, Why do ye vaunt of the righteousness of the law and works, and why do ye glory that ye are the people and children of God for the same? If ye know not of whom ye are born, I will tell you: ye are bond-servants of a bond-woman. And what servants? The bond-servants of the law, and consequently of sin, of death, and of everlasting damnation. Now a servant is no inheritor, but is cast out of the house. Wherefore the Pope, with all his kingdom, and all other justiciaries (what outward appearance of holiness soever they have), which hope to obtain grace and salvation by the law, are servants of that bond-woman, and have no inheritance with the children of the free woman. I speak now, not of the popes, cardinals, bishops, and monks, that were manifestly wicked, who have made their bellies their god, and have committed such horrible sins as I will not willingly name; but of the best of them, such I mean as lived holily, and went about through great labour and travel by keeping of their monkish order, to pacify the wrath of God, and to merit remission of their sins and everlasting life. These hear their sentence here pronounced, that the sons of the bond-woman must be cast out of the house with their mother the bond woman.

Such sentences, diligently considered, make us certain of our doctrine, and confirm us in the righteousness of faith, against the doctrine and righteousness of works, which the world embraceth and magnifieth, condemning

and despising the other. And this troubleth and offendeth weak consciences; which albeit they plainly see the impiety, the execrable wickedness, and horrible abominations of the Papists, yet, notwithstanding, they are not easily persuaded, that all the multitude which beareth the name and title of the church do err, and that there are but few of them which have a sound and a right opinion of the doctrine of faith. And if the papacy had the same holiness and austerity of life which it had in the time of the ancient fathers, Hierome, Ambrose, Augustine, and others, when the clergy had not yet so evil a fame for their simony, excess, abundance of riches, dissolute living, voluptuousness, whoredom, sodomitry, and such other infinite abominations, but lived after the rules and decrees of the fathers, religiously and holily in outward shew, and unmarried, what could we do now against the papacy?

The single life which the clergy kept very straitly in the time of the fathers, was a goodly thing, and made of men very angels in the sight of the world; and therefore Paul, in the second chapter to the Colossians, calleth it the religion of angels. And the Papists sing thus of their virgins: they led an angelical life, whilst they lived in the flesh, and yet lived contrary to the flesh. Moreover, the life, which they call the contemplative life (whereunto the clergymen were then very much given, utterly neglecting all civil and household government). had a goodly shew of holiness. Wherefore that outward shew and appearance of the old papacy remained at this day, we should peradventure do but little against it by our doctrine of faith, seeing we do now so little prevail, when (that old shew of outward holiness and severe discipline being utterly abolished) there is nothing to be seen but a very sink and puddle of all vices and abominations.

But admit the case, that the old discipline and religion of the papacy were yet remaining; notwithstanding we ought by the example of Paul, who vehemently pursued the false apostles, which outwardly appeared to be very godly and holy men) to fight against the merit-mongers of the papistical kingdom, and to say: Although ye live a single life, tiring and consuming your bodies with continual travel, and walking in the humility and religion of angels, yet are ye servants of the law, of sin, and of the devil, and must be cast out of the house; for ye

seek righteousness and salvation by your works, and not by Christ.

Wherefore we ought not so much to consider the wicked life of the Papists, as their abominable doctrine and hypocrisy, against the which we specially fight. Let us suppose then that the religion and discipline of the old papacy doth yet still flourish, and that it is now observed with as much severity and straitness as ever it was; yet must we say notwithstanding: If ye have nothing but this holiness and chastity of life to set against the wrath and judgment of God, ye are in very deed the sons of the bond-woman, which must be cast out of the kingdom of heaven, and be damned.

And now they themselves do not defend their wicked life, nay rather they which are the best and the soundest of them all do detest it; but they fight for the maintenance and defence of the doctrine of devils, for hypocrisy, and for the righteousness of works. Here they allege the authority of councils and the examples of holy fathers, whom they affirm to have been the authors of their holy orders and statutes. Therefore we fight not against the manifest wickedness and abominations of the papacy, but against the greatest holiness and holiest saints thereof, which think they lead an angelical life, whilst they dream that they keep not only the commandments of God, but also the counsels of Christ, and do works of supererogation, and such as they are not bound to do. This we see is to labour in vain, except they take hold of that only and alone, which Christ saith is only necessary, and choose the good part with Mary, which shall not be taken from them.

This did Bernard, a man so godly, so holy, and so chaste, that he is to be commended and conferred above them all. He being once grievously sick, and having no hope of life, put not his trust in his single life wherein he had lived most chastly, not in his good works and deeds of charity, whereof he had done many; but removed them far out of his sight, and receiving the benefit of Christ by faith, he said: I have lived wickedly. But thou Lord Jesus Christ, by double right dost possess the kingdom of heaven; first, because thou art the Son of God; secondly, because thou hast purchased it by thy death and passion. The first thou keepest for thyself by thy birth-right; the second thou givest to me, not by the

right of my works, but by the right of grace. He set not against the wrath of God his monkery nor his angelical life; but he took hold of that one thing which was necessary, and so was saved. I think that Hierome, Gregory, and many others of the fathers, were saved after the same sort. And it is not to be doubted, but that also in the Old Testament many kings of Israel, and other idolators, were saved in like manner, who, at the hour of death, casting away their vain trust which they had in idols, took hold of the promise of God, which was made unto the seed of Abraham, that is to say, Christ, in whom all nations should be blessed. And if there be any of the Papists which shall be saved, they must simply lean not to their own good deeds and deserts, but to the mercy of God offered unto us in Christ, and say with Paul: I have not mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is by faith in Christ (Phil. iii. 9.).

Verse 31. Then brethren, we are not children of the servant, but of the free-woman.

Paul here concludeth his allegory of the barren church, and of the fruitful people of the law. We are not (saith he) the children of the bond-woman; that is to say, we are not under the law, which begetteth unto bondage, that is, which terrifieth, accuseth, and bringeth to desperation; but we are delivered from it by Christ; therefore it cannot terrify nor condemn us. Of this we have spoken enough before. Moreover, although the sons of the bond-woman do persecute us never so much for a time, yet this is our comfort, that they shall be compelled to leave the inheritance unto us, which belongeth unto us that are the sons of the free-woman, and shall at length be cast into utter darkness (Matt. xxv. 30.).

Paul therefore by these words [bond-woman and free-woman] took occasion (as we have heard) to reject the righteousness of the law, and to confirm the doctrine of justification. And of purpose he taketh hold of this word [free-woman], vehemently urging and amplifying the same, especially in the beginning of the chapter following. Whereupon he taketh occasion to reason of Christian liberty, the knowledge whereof is very necessary; for the Pope hath in a manner quite overthrown it,

and made the church subject to man's traditions and ceremonies, and to a most miserable and filthy bondage. That liberty which is purchased by Christ, is unto us at this day a most strong fort, whereby we defend ourselves against the tyranny of the Pope. Wherefore we must diligently consider this doctrine of Christian liberty, as well to confirm the doctrine of justification, as also to raise up and comfort weak consciences against so many troubles and offences, which our adversaries do impute unto the gospel. Now, Christian liberty is a very spiritual thing, which the carnal man doth not understand (Rom. ix. 23.). Yea, they which have the first fruits of the spirit, and can talk well thereof, do very hardly retain it in their heart. It seemeth to reason, that it is a matter of small importance. Therefore, if the Holy Ghost do not magnify it that it may be esteemed accordingly, it is condemned.

CHAP. V.

PAUL now drawing towards the end of his epistle, disputeth very vehemently in defence of the doctrine of faith and Christian liberty, against the false apostles, the enemies and destroyers of the same; against whom he casteth out very thundering words, to beat them down and utterly to vanquish them. And wherewithal he exhorteth the Galatians to fly their pernicious doctrine as a dangerous poison. In his exhortation he intermingleth threatenings and promises, trying every way that he may keep them in that liberty which Christ hath purchased for them, saying:

Verse 1. Stand fast therefore in that liberty wherein Christ hath made us free.

That is to say, Be ye stedfast. So Peter saith (1 Pet. v. 8, 9.): Be sober and watch; for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, being stedfast in the faith. Be ye not careless (saith he), but stedfast and constant. Lie not down and sleep, but stand up. As if he would say: It standeth you in hand to be watchful and constant, that ye may keep and hold fast that liberty wherein Christ has made you free. They that are secure and negligent cannot keep this liberty. For Satan most deadly hateth the light of the gospel, that is to say, the doctrine of grace, liberty, consolation, and life. Therefore when he seeth that it beginneth once to appear, forthwith he fighteth against it with all might and main, stirring up storms and tempests to hinder the course thereof, and utterly to overthrow it. Wherefore Paul warneth the faithful not to sleep, not to be negligent; but constantly and valiantly to resist Satan, that he spoil them not of that liberty which Christ hath purchased for them.

Every word hath here a certain vehemency. Stand (saith he), As if he should say: Here have ye need of

great diligence and vigilancy. In that liberty. In what liberty? Not in that wherewith the emperor hath made us free, but that wherewith Christ hath made us free. The emperor hath given, or rather was compelled to give to the bishop of Rome a free city, and other lands; also immunities, privileges, and prerogatives, &c. This is also a liberty, but it is a civil liberty, whereby the Pope, with all his clergy, is exempt from all public charges. Moreover, there is a fleshly, or rather a devilish liberty, whereby the devil chiefly reigneth throughout the whole world. For they that enjoy this liberty obey neither God nor laws, but do what they list. This liberty the people seek and embrace at this day: and so do the sectaries, which will be at liberty in their opinions and in all their doings, to the end they may teach and do whatsoever they dream to be good and sound without apprehension. These stand in that liberty wherein the devil hath made them free. But we speak not here of this liberty, albeit the whole world seeketh no other liberty. Neither do we speak of the civil liberty, but of a far other manner of liberty, which the devil hateth and resisteth with all his power.

This is that liberty whereby Christ hath made us free, not from an earthly bondage, or from the Babylonical captivity, or from the tyranny of the Turks, but from God's everlasting wrath. And where is this done? In the conscience. There resteth our liberty, and goeth no farther. For Christ hath made us free; not civilly, nor carnally, but divinely, that is to say, we are made free in such sort, that our conscience is now free and quiet, not fearing the wrath of God to come. This is that true and inestimable liberty, to the excellence and majesty whereof, if we compare the other, they are but as one drop of water in respect of the whole sea. For who is able to express what a thing it is, when a man is assured in his heart that God neither is nor will be angry with him, but will be for ever a merciful and a loving father unto him for Christ's sake? This is indeed a marvellous and incomprehensible liberty, to have the most high and sovereign majesty so favourable unto us, that he doth not only defend, maintain, and succour us in this life, but also, as touching our bodies, will so deliver us, that our bodies, which are sown in corruption, in dishonour, and infirmity, shall rise again in incorruption, in

glory, and power (1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.). Wherefore this is an inestimable liberty, that we are made free from the wrath of God for ever; and is greater than heaven and earth, and all other creatures.

Of this liberty there followeth another, whereby through Christ we are made free from the law, sin, death, the power of the devil, hell, &c. For, as the wrath of God cannot terrify us, for that Christ hath delivered us from the same, so the law, sin, and death cannot accuse and condemn us. And although the law accuse us, and sin terrify us, yet they cannot drive us to desperation. For faith, which overcometh the world, by and by saith: These things belong not unto me; for Christ hath made me free, and delivered me from them all. Likewise death, which is the most mighty and most dreadful thing in all the world, is utterly vanquished in the conscience by this liberty of the spirit. Wherefore the majesty of this Christian liberty is highly to be esteemed, and diligently considered. It is an easy matter for a man to speak these words, Freedom from the wrath of God, sin, and death; but, in the time of temptation, experience, and practice, to apply them to himself, and to feel the excellency of this liberty and the fruit thereof, it is an harder matter than can be expressed.

Therefore our conscience must be instructed and prepared before-hand, that when we feel the accusation of the law, the terrors of sin, the hour of death, and the wrath of God, we may remove these heavy sights and fearful fantasies out of our minds, and set in the place thereof the freedom purchased by Christ, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, life, and the everlasting mercy of God. And albeit the feeling of the contrary be very strong, yet let us assure ourselves that it shall not long endure, according to that saying of the prophet: For a moment, in mine anger, I hid my face from thee for a little season; but with everlasting mercy I have compassion on thee (Isaiah lxxv. 8.). But this is very hard to do. Wherefore, that liberty which Christ hath purchased for us, is not so soon believed as it is named. If it could be apprehended with a sure and a stedfast faith, then no rage or terror of the world, of the law, sin, death, or the devil could be so great, but by-and-by it should be swallowed up as a little drop of water is swallowed of the main sea. And certainly this Christian liberty swalloweth up at once,

and taketh quite away the whole heap of evils, the law, sin, death, God's wrath, and briefly the serpent himself, with his head and whole power, and, in the stead thereof, it placeth righteousness, peace, and everlasting life, &c. (Luke xi. 28.). But blessed is he that understandeth and believeth.

Let us learn, therefore, to magnify this our liberty, purchased by Jesus Christ the Son of God, by whom all things were created both in heaven and earth. Which liberty he hath purchased with no other price than with his own blood, to deliver us, not from any bodily or temporal servitude, but from a spiritual and everlasting bondage, under mighty and invincible tyrants, to wit, the law, sin, death, and the devil, and so to reconcile us unto God his father. Now, since these enemies are overcome, and we reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, it is certain that we are righteous before God, and that whatsoever we do, pleaseth him. And although there be certain remnants of sin yet still in us, they are not laid to our charge, but pardoned for Christ's sake.

Paul useth words of great force and vehemency. Stand (saith he) in that liberty wherein Christ hath made you free. This liberty then is not given unto us by the law, or for our righteousness, but freely for Christ's sake: which thing Paul here witnesseth and plainly declareth throughout his whole epistle. Christ also, in the eighth of John, saith, If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. He only is set betwixt us and the evils which trouble and afflict us: he hath overcome them and taken them away, so that they can no more oppress us nor condemn us. In the stead of sin and death, he giveth unto us righteousness and everlasting life; and by this means he changeth the bondage and terrors of the law into the liberty of conscience and consolation of the gospel; which saith, Be of good comfort, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee (Matt. ix. 2.). Whosoever then believeth in Christ the Son of God, he hath this liberty.

Reason cannot perceive the excellency of this matter; which, when a man considereth in spirit, he shall see that it is inestimable. For who is able to conceive in his mind how great and unspeakable a gift it is to have the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and everlasting life, in the stead of the law, sin, death, and the wrath of God,

and to have God himself favourable and merciful for ever? The Papists and the hypocrites, that seek the righteousness of the law, or their own righteousness, do glory that they likewise have remission of sins, righteousness, life, and the grace of God. For they vaunt that they also have this liberty, and they promise the same unto others; but in very deed they are the servants of corruption, and in the time of temptation all their vain confidence vanisheth away even in a moment. For they trust unto the works and satisfactions of men, and not to the word of God, nor unto Christ. Wherefore it is impossible for the justiciaries, which seek to win heaven, life, and salvation by works and merits, to know what the liberty and deliverance from sin is.

Contrariwise, our liberty hath for her foundation Christ himself, who is our everlasting high bishop, sitting at the right hand of God, and making intercession for us. Wherefore, the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, life, and liberty, which we have through him, is sure, certain, and perpetual, so that we believe the same. Wherefore, if we cleave unto Christ with a stedfast faith, and stand fast in that liberty wherein he hath made us free, we shall obtain those inestimable gifts; but if we be careless and negligent, we shall lose them. It is not without cause that Paul biddeth us watch and stand fast; for he knew that the devil seeketh nothing more than to spoil us of this liberty, which cost Christ so great a price, and to entangle us again by his ministers in the yoke of bondage, as followeth.

Verse 1. *And be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

Paul hath spoken most effectually and profoundly as concerning grace and Christian liberty, and with high and mighty words hath exhorted the Galatians to continue in the same; for it is easily lost. Therefore he biddeth them stand fast, lest that, through negligence or security, they fall back again from grace and faith to the law and works. Now, because reason judgeth that there can be no danger in preferring the righteousness of the law before the righteousness of faith, therefore with a certain indignation he inveigheth against the law, and with great contempt he calleth it a yoke, yea a yoke of bondage. So

Peter calleth it also: Why tempt ye God to lay a yoke on the disciples necks, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? (Acts xv.) And thus he turneth all things to the contrary. For the false apostles did abase the promise, and magnified the law and the works thereof in this wise: "If ye will be made free (say they) from sin and death, and obtain righteousness and life, fulfil the law, be circumcised, observe days, months, times, and years, offer sacrifices, and do such other like things; then shall this obedience of the law justify and save you." But Paul saith the contrary. They (saith he) that teach the law after this sort, do not set men's consciences at liberty, but snare and entangle them with a yoke, yea and that with a yoke of bondage.

He speaketh therefore of the law very basely and contemptuously, and calleth it a hard bondage and a servile yoke. And this he doth not without great cause. For this pernicious opinion of the law, that it justifieth and maketh men righteous before God, is deeply rooted in man's reason, and all mankind is so wrapped in it, that it can hardly get out. And Paul seemeth here to compare those that seek righteousness by the law, unto oxen that be tied to the yoke, to the end he might take from it the glory of justifying and of righteousness. For, like as oxen do draw in the yoke with great toil, receive nothing thereby but forage or pasture, and when they be able to draw the yoke no more, are appointed to the slaughter; even so, they that seek righteousness by the law, are captives, and oppressed with the yoke of bondage, that is to say, with the law; and when they have tired themselves a long time in the works of the law with great and grievous toil, in the end this is their reward, that they are miserable and perpetual servants. And whereof? Even of sin, death, God's wrath, and of the devil. Wherefore there is no greater or harder bondage than the bondage of the law. It is not without cause then, that Paul calleth it the yoke of bondage. For, as we have often said before, the law doth but reveal, increase, and aggravate sin, accuse, terrify, condemn, and gender wrath, and finally it driveth poor consciences into desperation, which is the most miserable and most grievous bondage that can be (Rom. iii. 3, 4, 5.).

He useth, therefore, very vehement words. For he would gladly persuade them, that they should not suffer

this intolerable burden to be laid upon their shoulders by the false apostles, or be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. As if he should say, We stand not here upon a matter of small importance, but either of everlasting liberty, or everlasting bondage. For like as freedom from God's wrath and all evils is not temporal or carnal, but everlasting; even so the bondage of sin, death, the devil, and damnation (wherewith all they be oppressed which will be made righteous and saved by the law), is not corporal and such as continueth for a time, but everlasting. For such workers of the law as go about to perform and accomplish all things precisely and exactly (for of such Paul speaketh) can never find quietness and peace of conscience in this life. They always doubt of the good will of God towards them. They are always in fear of death, the wrath and judgment of God, and after this life they shall be punished for their unbelief with everlasting damnation.

Therefore, the doers of the law, and such as stand altogether upon the righteousness and works thereof, are rightly called the devil's martyrs. They take more pains, and punish themselves more, in purchasing hell (according to the proverb), than the martyrs of Christ do in obtaining heaven. For they are tormented two manner of ways: first, they miserably afflict themselves whilst they live here; by doing of many hard and great works, and all in vain; and afterwards, when they die, they reap for a recompence eternal damnation. Thus are they most miserable martyrs, both in this life and in the life to come, and their bondage is everlasting. Contrariwise, the godly have troubles in this world, but in Christ they have peace, because they believe that he hath overcome the world (John xvi. 33.). Wherefore, we must stand fast in that freedom which Christ hath purchased for us by his death, and we must take good heed that we be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage; as it happeneth at this day to the fantastical spirits, who, falling away from faith and from this freedom, have procured unto themselves here a temporal bondage, and in the world to come shall be oppressed with an everlasting bondage. As for the Papists, the most part of them are become at this day plain epicures. Therefore, while they may, they use the liberty of the flesh, singing this careless song, *Ede, bibo, ludo, post mortem nulla voluptas*; that is,

Eat, drink, and make good cheer, for after this life there is no pleasure. But they are the very bond-slaves of the devil, by whom they are holden captives at his will and pleasure; therefore they shall feel this everlasting bondage in hell. Hitherto, Paul's exhortation hath been vehement and earnest, but that which followeth doth far pass it.

Verse 2. Behold I, Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

Paul here, wonderfully stirred up with zeal and fervency of spirit, thundereth against the law and circumcision; and these thundering words proceeding of great zeal, the Holy Ghost wrestleth from him, when he saith, Behold I, Paul, &c. I (I say), who know that I have not received the gospel by man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and have commission and authority from above, to publish and to preach the same unto you, do tell you, that, if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing at all. This is a very hard sentence, whereby Paul declareth, that to be circumcised is as much as to make Christ utterly unprofitable; not in respect of himself, but of the Galatians, who, being deceived by the subtilty of the false apostles, believed, that besides faith in Christ, it was needful for the faithful to be circumcised, without the which they could not obtain salvation.

This place is as it were a touch-stone, whereby we may most certainly and freely judge of all doctrines, works, religions, and ceremonies of all men. Whosoever teach that there is any thing necessary to salvation (whether they be Papists, Turks, Jews, or Sectaries), besides faith in Christ, or shall devise any work or religion, or observe any rule, tradition, or ceremony whatsoever, with this opinion that by such things they shall obtain forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and everlasting life, they hear in this place the sentence of the Holy Ghost pronounced against them by the apostle, that Christ profiteth them nothing. Seeing Paul durst give this sentence against the law and circumcision, which were ordained of God himself, what durst he not do against the chaff and the dross of men's traditions?

Wherefore, this place is a terrible thunderbolt against all the kingdom of the Pope. For all the priests, monks,

and hermits, that live in their cloisters (I speak of the best of them), reposed all their trust and confidence in their own works, righteousness, vows, and merits, and not in Christ, whom they most wickedly and blasphemously imagine to be an angry judge, an accuser, and condemner; and therefore here they hear their judgment, that Christ profiteth them nothing. For if they can put away sins, and deserve forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, through their own righteousness and straitness of life, then to what purpose was Christ born? What profit have they by his death and blood-shedding, by his resurrection, victory over sin, death, and the devil, seeing they are able to overcome these monsters by their own strength? and what tongue can express, or what heart can conceive how horrible a thing it is to make Christ unprofitable? Therefore the apostle casteth out these words with great displeasure and indignation, If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing; that is to say, no profit shall redound unto you of all his benefits, but he hath bestowed them all upon you in vain.

Hereby it appeareth sufficiently, that nothing under the sun is more hurtful than the doctrine of men's traditions and works, for they utterly abolish and overthrow at once the truth of the gospel, faith, the true worshipping of God, and Christ himself, in whom the Father hath ordained all things. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In him dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii.) Wherefore, all they that are either authors or maintainers of the doctrine of works are oppressors of the gospel, make the death and victory of Christ unprofitable, blemish and deface his sacraments, and utterly take away the true use thereof, and briefly, they are blasphemers, enemies and deniers of God, and of all his promises and benefits. Whoso is not moved with these words of Paul (which calleth the law a yoke of bondage, and saith, that they which affirm the keeping of circumcision to be necessary to salvation, make Christ unprofitable), and cannot be given from the law and circumcision, nor yet from the confidence which he hath in his own righteousness and works, nor be stirred up to seek that liberty which is in Christ, his heart is harder than stone and iron.

This is therefore a most certain and clear sentence, that Christ is unprofitable; that is to say, he is born, crucified,

and risen again in vain to him that is circumcised, that is, which putteth his trust in circumcision. For (as I have said before) Paul speaketh not here of the work of circumcision (which hurteth not him that hath no affiance or opinion of righteousness in it), but of the use of the work, that is to say of the confidence and righteousness that is annexed to the work: for we must understand Paul according to the matter whereof he intreateth, or according to the argument which he hath in hand, which is that men be not justified by the law, by works, by circumcision, or such like. He saith not that works of themselves are nothing; but the confidence and righteousness of works are nothing; for that maketh Christ unprofitable. Therefore, whoso receiveth circumcision, with this opinion, that it is necessary to justification, to him Christ availeth nothing.

Let us bear this well in mind in our private temptations, when the devil accuseth and terrifieth our conscience to drive it to desperation. For he is the father of lying, and the enemy of Christian liberty; therefore he tormenteth us every moment with false fears, that when our conscience hath lost this Christian liberty, it should feel the remorse of sin and condemnation, and always remain in anguish and terror. When that great dragon (I say), that old serpent the devil (who deceiveth the whole world, and accuseth our brethren in the presence of God day and night, Apoc. xii.) cometh and layeth unto thy charge, that thou hast not only done no good, but hast also transgressed the law of God, say unto him, Thou troublest me with the remembrance of my sins past. Thou puttest me also in mind that I have done no good. But this is nothing to me: for if either I trusted in mine own good deeds, or distrusted because I have done none, Christ should both ways profit me nothing at all. Therefore, whether thou lay my sins before me, or my good works, I pass not; but removing both far out of my sight, I only rest in that liberty wherein Christ hath made me free; I know him to be profitable unto me, therefore I will not make him unprofitable; which I should do, if either I should presume to purchase myself favour and everlasting life by my good deeds, or should despair of my salvation because of my sins.

Wherefore, let us learn with all diligence to separate Christ far from all works, as well good as evil; from all

laws both of God and man, and from all troubled consciences; for with all these Christ hath nothing to do. He hath to do, I grant, with afflicted consciences; howbeit not to afflict them more, but to raise them up, and in their affliction to comfort them. Therefore, if Christ appear in the likeness of an angry judge, or of a law-giver that requireth a strait accompt of our life past; then let us assure ourselves that it is not Christ, but a raging fiend. For the scripture painteth our Christ to be our reconciliation, our advocate, and our comforter. Such a one he is, and ever shall be: he cannot be unlike himself.

Therefore, whensoever the devil, transforming himself into the likeness of Christ, disputeth with us after this manner: This thou oughtest, being admonished by my word, to have done, and hast not done it; and this thou oughtest not to have done, and hast done it; know thou, therefore, that I will take on thee, &c. Let this nothing at all move us, but by and by let us thus think with ourselves: Christ speaketh not to poor afflicted and despairing consciences after this manner; he addeth not affliction to the afflicted; he breaketh not the bruised reed, neither quencheth he the smoking flax (Isaiah xlii. 3.) Indeed to the hard-hearted he speaketh sharply: but such as are terrified and afflicted, he most lovingly and comfortably allureth unto him, saying, Come unto me all ye that travel and be heavy laden, and I will refresh you. (Matt. xi. 28.) I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (ix. 13.) Be of good comfort, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee (ix. 2) Be not afraid, I have overcome the world (John xvi. 33.) The Son of Man came to seek out and to save that which was lost (Luke xix. 10.) We must take good heed therefore lest that we, being deceived with the wonderful slights and infinite subtilties of Satan, do receive an accuser and condemner in the stead of a comforter and saviour; and so under the vizard of a false Christ, that is to say, of the devil, we lose the true Christ, and make him unprofitable unto us. Thus much have we said as touching private and particular temptations, and how we should use ourselves therein.

Verse 3. *For I testify unto every man which is circumcised, that he is bound to keep the whole law.*

The first inconvenience is indeed very great, where Paul saith that Christ profiteth them nothing which are circumcised: an this that followeth is nothing less, where he saith, that they which are circumcised are bound to keep the whole law. He speaketh these words with such earnestness and vehemency of spirit, that he confirmeth them with an oath: I testify, that is to say, I swear by the living God. But these words may be expounded two ways, negatively and affirmatively. Negatively, after this manner: I testify unto every man which is circumcised, that he is bound to keep the whole law, that is to say, that he performeth no piece of the law: yea, that in the very work of circumcision he is not circumcised, and even in the fulfilling of the law he fulfilleth it not, but transgresseth it. And this seemeth to me to be the simple and true meaning of Paul in this place. Afterwards, in the sixth chapter, he expoundeth himself, saying, They themselves which are circumcised, keep not the law. So he saith also before, in the third chapter: Whosoever are of the works of the law, are under the curse. As if he said, Although ye be circumcised, yet are ye not righteous and free from the law; but by this deed ye are rather debtors and bond-servants of the law; and the more ye go about to satisfy the law, and to be set free from it, the more ye entangle and snare yourselves in the yoke thereof, so that it hath more power to accuse and condemn you. This is to go backward like the crab, and to wash away filth with filth.

And this which I say by occasion of Paul's words, I have learned both in myself and others. I have seen many which have painfully travelled, and upon mere conscience have done as much as was possible for them to do, in fasting, in prayer, in wearing of hair, in punishing and tormenting their bodies with sundry exercises (whereby at length they must needs have utterly consumed them, yea although they had been made of iron), and all to this end, that they might obtain quietness and peace of conscience; notwithstanding, the more they travelled, the more they were stricken down with fear, and especially when the hour of death approached, they were so fearful

that I have seen many murderers and other malefactors condemned to death, dying more courageously than they did, which notwithstanding had lived very holily.

Therefore it is most true, that they which do the law, do it not. For the more they go about to fulfil the law, the more they transgress it. Even so we say and judge of men's traditions. The more a man striveth to pacify his conscience thereby, the more he troubleth and tormenteth it. When I was a monk, I endeavoured as much as was possible to live after the straight rule of mine order; I was wont to shrive myself with great devotion, and to reckon up all my sins (yet being always very contrite before); and I returned to confession very often, and thoroughly performed the penance that was enjoined unto me: yet for all this my conscience could never be fully certified, but was always in doubt, and said: This or that thou hast not done rightly; thou wast not contrite and sorrowful enough; this sin thou didst omit in thy confession, &c. Therefore, the more I went about to help my weak, wavering, and afflicted conscience by men's traditions, the more weak and doubtful, and the more afflicted I was. And thus, the more I observed men's traditions, the more I transgressed them, and in seeking after righteousness by mine order, I could never attain unto it: for it is impossible (as Paul saith) that the conscience should be pacified by the works of the law, and much more by men's traditions, without the promise and glad tidings concerning Christ.

Wherefore they that seek to be justified and quickened by the law, are much further off from righteousness and life, than the publicans, sinners, and harlots. For they cannot trust to their own works, seeing they be such that they cannot hope to obtain grace and forgiveness of sins thereby. For if righteousness and works done according to the law do not justify, how can sins justify, which are committed contrary to the law? Therefore in this point they are in far better case than the justiciaries, for they have no affiance in their own works, which greatly hindereth true faith in Christ, if it do not utterly take it away. Contrariwise, the justiciaries, which abstain outwardly from sins, and live holily and without blame in the sight of the world, cannot be without the opinion of their own righteousness, with which the true faith in Christ cannot stand; and for this cause they be more miserable than the

publicans and harlots; who offer not their good works to God in his displeasure, that for the same he may recompence them with everlasting life (as the justiciaries do), for they have none to offer; but desire that their sins may be pardoned for Christ's sake. &c.

The other exposition is affirmative. He that is circumcised is also bound to keep the whole law. For he that receiveth Moses in one point must of necessity receive him in all. And it helpeth nothing to say that circumcision is necessary, and not the rest of Moses' laws. For by the same reason that thou art bound to keep circumcision, thou art also bound to keep the whole law. Now to be bound to keep the whole law is nothing else but to shew, in effect, that Christ is not yet come. If this be true, then are we bound to keep all the Jewish ceremonies and laws touching meats, places, and times; and Christ must be looked for as yet to come, that he may abolish the Jewish kingdom and priesthood, and set up a new kingdom throughout the whole world. But the whole scripture witnesseth, and the sequel thereof plainly declareth, that Christ is already come; that by his death, he has redeemed mankind, that he hath abolished the law, and that he hath fulfilled all things which all the prophets have foretold of him. Therefore, the law being clean abolished and quite taken away, he hath given unto us grace and truth. It is not then the law nor the works thereof, but it is the faith in Jesus Christ that maketh a man righteous.

Some would bind us, at this day, to certain of Moses' laws that like them best, as the false apostle would have done at that time. But this is in no wise to be suffered. For, if we give Moses leave to rule over us in any thing, we are bound to obey him in all things. Wherefore we will not be burdened by any law of Moses. We grant that he is to be read amongst us, and to be heard as a prophet and a witness-bearer of Christ; and moreover, that out of him we may take good examples of good laws and holy life. But we will not suffer him in any wise to have dominion over our conscience. In this case let him be dead and buried, and let no man know where his grave is (Deut. xxxiv. 6.)

The former exposition, that is to say, the negative, seemeth to me to be more apt and more spiritual; notwithstanding, both are good, and both do condemn the

righteousness of the law. The first is, that we are so far from obtaining righteousness by the law, that the more we go about to accomplish the law, the more we transgress the law. The second is, that he which will perform any piece of the law is bound to keep the whole law. And to conclude, that Christ profiteth them nothing at all which will be justified by the law.

Hereby it appeareth, that Paul meaneth nothing else, but that the law is a plain denial of Christ. Now it is a wonderful thing that Paul dare affirm, that the law of Moses, which was given by God to the people of Israel, is a denial of Christ. Why then did God give it? Before the coming of Christ, and before his manifestation in the flesh, the law was necessary. For the law is our school-master to bring us unto Christ. But now that Christ is revealed, in that we believe in him, we are no longer under the school-master. Hereof we have spoken largely enough before the end of the third chapter. Whoso teacheth then that the law is necessary to righteousness, teacheth a plain denial of Christ and of all his benefits; he maketh God a liar, yea he maketh the law also a liar; for the law itself beareth witness of Christ and of the promises made as concerning Christ, and hath foretold that he should be a king of grace, and not of the law.

Verse 4. *Ye are abolished [or separated] from Christ; whosoever are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace.*

Here Paul expoundeth himself, and sheweth that he speaketh not simply of the law, nor of the works of circumcision, but of the confidence and opinion that men have to be justified thereby. As if he would say, I do not utterly condemn the law or circumcision (for it is lawful for me to drink, to eat, and to keep company with the Jews according to the law: it is lawful for me to circumcise Timothy), but to seek to be justified by the law, as if Christ were not yet come, or, being now present, he alone were not able to justify, this is it which I condemn; for this is to be separated from Christ. Therefore, saith he, ye are abolished, that is, ye are utterly void of Christ, Christ is not in you, he worketh not in you any more; ye are not partakers of the knowledge, the spirit, the fellowship, the favour, the liberty, the life, or

the doings of Christ, but ye are utterly separate from him, so that he hath no more to do with you, nor ye with him.

These words of Paul are diligently to be noted, that to seek righteousness by the law is nothing else but to be separated from Christ, and to make him utterly unprofitable. What can be spoken more mightily against the law? What can be set against this thunderbolt? Wherefore it is impossible that Christ and the law should dwell together in one heart; for either the law or Christ must give place. But if thou think that Christ and the law can dwell together, then be thou sure that Christ dwelleth not in thy heart, but the devil in the likeness of Christ, accusing and terrifying thee, and straitly exacting of thee the law and the works thereof. For the true Christ (as I have said before) neither calleth thee to a reckoning for thy sins, nor biddeth thee to trust to thine own good works. And the true knowledge of Christ, or faith, disputeth not whether thou hast done good works to righteousness, or evil works to condemnation; but simply concludeth after this sort: If thou have done good works, thou art not therefore justified; or if thou have done evil works, thou art not therefore condemned. I nei her take from good works their praise, nor commend evil works. But in the matter of justification, I say, we must look how we may hold Christ, lest, if we seek to be justified by the law, we make him unprofitable unto us. For it is Christ alone that justifieth me, both against any evil deeds, and without my good deeds. If I have this persuasion of Christ, I lay hold of the true Christ. But if I think that he exacteth the law and works of me to salvation, then he becometh unprofitable unto me, and I am utterly separated from him.

These are dreadful sentences and threatenings against the righteousness of the law, and man's own righteousness. Moreover, they are also most certain principles which confirm the article of justification. This is then the final conclusion: either thou must forego Christ, or the righteousness of the law. If thou retain Christ, thou art righteous before God; but if thou stick to the law, Christ availeth thee nothing: thou art bound to keep the whole law, and thou hast now sentence already pronounced against thee: Cursed is every one that fulfilleth not all the things that are written in this law (Deut. xxvii. 26.). As we have said

of the law; so we say also of men's traditions. Either the Pope, with his religious rout, must reject all those things wherein hitherto he hath put his trust, or else Christ shall be unprofitable to them. And hereby we may plainly see how pernicious and pestilent the popish doctrine hath been. For it hath led men clean away from Christ, and made him altogether unprofitable. God complaineth, in the 23d of Jeremiah, that the prophets prophesied lies and the dreams of their own heart, to the end that his people should forget his name. Therefore, like as the false prophets, leaving the right interpretation of the law, and the true doctrine concerning the seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, preaching their own dreams, to the end that the people should forget their God: even so, the Papists having darkened and defaced the doctrine of Christ, so that they made it of none effect, taught and set forth nothing else but the doctrine of works, whereby they drew the whole world away from Christ. Whoso earnestly considereth this matter cannot but fear and tremble.

Verse 4. *Ye are fallen from grace.*

That is to say, Ye are no longer in the kingdom of grace. For like as he that is in a ship, on which side soever he falleth into the sea, is drowned, even so he which is fallen from grace must needs perish. He therefore that will be justified by the law is fallen into the sea, and hath cast himself into danger of eternal death. Now, if they fall from grace, which will be justified by the moral law, whither shall they fall, I pray you, which will be justified by their own traditions and vows? Even to the bottom of hell. No, forsooth, for they fly up into heaven; for so they themselves have taught us. "Who-
 " soever live (say they) according to the rule of St.
 " Francis, Dominick, Benedict, or such other, the peace
 " and mercy of God is upon them." Again, "All they
 " that observe and keep chastity, obedience, &c. shall
 " have everlasting life." But let these toys go to the devil, from whence they came, and hearken what Paul teacheth thee here, and what Christ teacheth, saying, He that believeth in the Son of God hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not in the Son, shall not see life, but the

wrath of God abideth upon him (John iii. 36.). Again, He that believeth not is judged already (John iii. 18.)

Now, like as all the doctrine of the Papists (to note this by the way) concerning men's traditions, works, vows, and merits, was most common in the world; so was it thought to be the best and most certain of all others, whereby the devil hath both set up and established his kingdom most mightily. Therefore, when we at this day do impugn and vanquish this doctrine by the power of God's word, as chaff is driven away by the wind, it is no marvel that Satan rageth so cruelly against us, raiseth up slanders and offences every where, and setteth the whole world in our tops. Then will some man say, It had been better to have held our peace; for then had none of these evils been raised up. But we ought more to esteem the favour of God, whose glory we set forth, than to care for the tyranny of the world which persecuteth us. For what is the Pope and the whole world in comparison of God? Indeed we are weak, and bear an heavenly treasure in brittle and earthly vessels; but although the vessels be never so brittle, yet is the treasure inestimable (2 Cor. iv. 7.).

These words, Ye are fallen from grace, must not be coldly or slenderly considered; for they are weighty and of great importance. He that falleth from grace utterly loseth the atonement, the forgiveness of sins, the righteousness, liberty, and life, that Jesus Christ hath merited for us by his death and resurrection; and instead thereof he purchaseth to himself the wrath and judgment of God, sin, death, the bondage of the devil, and everlasting damnation. And this place strongly confirmeth and fortifieth our doctrine concerning faith or the article of justification, and marvellously comforteth us against the cruel rage of the Papists, that persecute and condemn us as heretics, because we teach this article. Indeed this place ought to fear the enemies of faith and grace, that is to say, all that seek righteousness by works, from persecuting and blaspheming the word of grace, life, and everlasting salvation. But they be so hard-hearted and obstinate, that seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, and when they read this dreadful sentence of the apostle pronounced against them, they understand it not. Let us leave them therefore unto themselves: for they are blind, and leaders of the blind. (Matt. xv. 14.)

Verse 5. *For we, in spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness through faith.*

Paul here knitteth up the matter with a notable conclusion, saying, Ye will be justified by the law, by circumcision, and by works; but we seek not to be justified by this means, lest Christ should be made utterly unprofitable unto us, and we become debtors to perform the whole law, and so finally fall away from grace; but we wait in spirit through faith for the hope of righteousness. Every word is here diligently to be noted, for they are pithy and full of power. He doth not only say as he is wont, We are justified by faith, or in spirit by faith, but moreover he addeth, We wait for the hope of righteousness, including hope also, that he may comprehend the whole matter of faith.

Hope, after the manner of the scripture, is taken two ways, namely, for the thing that is hoped for, and for the affection of him that hopeth. For the thing that is hoped for, it is taken in the first chapter to the Colossians: For the hope sake which is laid up for you in heaven, that is to say, the thing which ye hope for. For the affection of him that hopeth, it is taken in the eighth to the Romans: For we are saved by hope. So hope in this place also may be taken two ways, and so it yieldeth a double sense. The first is: We wait in spirit through faith for the hope of righteousness, that is to say, the righteousness hoped for, which shall be certainly revealed in such time as pleaseth the Lord to give it. The second: We wait in spirit by faith for righteousness with hope and desire, that is to say, we are righteous; howbeit our righteousness is not yet revealed, but hangeth yet in hope. For as long as we live here, sin remaineth in our flesh; there is also a law in our flesh and members, rebelling against the law of our mind, and leading us captives unto the service of sin (Rom. vii. 13.). Now, when these affections of the flesh do rage and reign, and we on the other side do through the spirit wrestle against the same, then is there a place for hope. Indeed we have begun to be justified through faith; whereby also we have received the first fruits of the spirit, and the mortification of the flesh is also begun in us; but we be not yet perfectly

righteous. It remaineth then that we be perfectly justified, and this is it which we hope for. So our righteousness is not yet in actual possession, but lieth under hope.

This is a sweet and a sound consolation, whereby afflicted and troubled consciences, feeling their sin, and terrified with every fiery dart of the devil, may be marvellously comforted. For the feeling of sin, the wrath of God, death, hell, and all other terrors, is wonderful strong in the conflict of conscience; as I myself, being taught by experience, do know. Then counsel must be given to the poor afflicted in this wise: Brother, thou desirest to have a sensible feeling of thy justification; that is, thou wouldest have such a feeling of God's favour, as thou hast of thine own sin: but that will not be. But thy righteousness ought to surmount all feeling of sin; that is to say, thy righteousness or justification whereupon thou holdest, standeth not upon thine own feeling, but upon thy hoping that it shall be revealed when it pleaseth the Lord. Wherefore thou must not judge according to the feeling of sin, which troubleth and terrifieth thee, but according to the promise and doctrine of faith, whereby Christ is promised unto thee, who is thy perfect and everlasting righteousness. Thus the hope of the afflicted, consisting in the inward affection, is stirred up by faith in the midst of all terrors and feeling of sin, to hope that he is righteous. Moreover, if hope be here taken for the thing which is hoped for, it is thus to be understood, that that which a man now seeth not, he hopeth in time shall be made perfect and clearly revealed.

Either sense may well stand; but the first, touching the inward desire and affection of hoping, bringeth more plentiful consolation. For my righteousness is not yet perfect, it cannot yet be felt; yet I do not despair; for faith sheweth unto me Christ in whom I trust, and when I have laid hold of him by faith, I wrestle against the fiery darts of the devil, and I take a good heart through hope against the feeling of sin, assuring myself that I have a perfect righteousness prepared for me in heaven. So both these sayings are true, that I am made righteous already by that righteousness which is begun in me; and also I am raised up in the same hope against sin, and wait for the full consummation of perfect righteousness in heaven.

These things are not rightly understood, but when they be put in practice.

What difference there is between faith and hope.

Here riseth a question, What difference there is between faith and hope? The sophisters and schoolmen have laboured very much in this matter, but they could never shew any certainty. Yea, to us which travel in the holy scriptures with much diligence, and also with more fulness and power of spirit (be it spoken without any brag), it is hard to find any difference. For there is so great affinity between faith and hope, that the one cannot be separate from the other. Notwithstanding there is a difference between them, which is gathered of their several offices, diversity of working, and of their ends.

First, they differ in respect of their subject, that is, of the ground wherein they rest: for faith resteth in the understanding, and hope resteth in the will; but in very deed they cannot be separated, the one having respect to the other, as the two cherubims of the mercy-seat, which could not be divided (Exod. xxv. 20.).

Secondly, they differ in respect of their office, that is, of their working. For faith telleth what is to be done; it teacheth, prescribeth, and directeth, and it is a knowledge. Hope is an exhortation which stirreth up the mind that it may be strong, bold, and courageous; that it may suffer and endure adversity, and in the midst thereof wait for better things.

Thirdly, they differ as touching their object, that is, the special matter whereunto they look. For faith hath for her object the truth, teaching us to cleave surely there o, and looking upon the word and promise of the thing that is promised. Hope hath for her object the goodness of God, and looketh upon the thing which is promised in the word, that is, upon such matters as faith teacheth us to be hoped for.

Fourthly, they differ in order: for faith is the beginning of life before all tribulation (Heb. xi.) But hope cometh afterwards, proceeding of tribulation (Rom. v.).

Fifthly, they differ by the diversity of working: for faith is a teacher and a judge, fighting against errors and heresies, judging spirits and doctrines; but hope is, as it were, the general or captain of the field, fighting against

tribulation, the cross, impatience, heaviness of spirit, weakness, desperation, and blasphemy, and it waiteth for good things, even in the midst of all evils.

Therefore, when I am instructed by faith in the word of God, and lay hold of Christ, believing in him with my whole heart, then am I righteous by this knowledge. When I am so justified by faith, or by this knowledge, by-and-by cometh the devil, the father of lies, and laboureth to extinguish my faith by wiles and subtilties; that is to say, by lies, errors, and heresies. Moreover, because he is a murderer, he goeth about also to oppress it by violence. Here hope, wrestling, layeth hold on the thing revealed by faith, and overcometh the devil that warreth against faith; and after this victory followeth peace and joy in the Holy Ghost: so that in very deed, faith and hope can scarcely be discerned the one from the other, and yet is there a certain difference between them. And that it may be the better perceived, I will set out the matter by a similitude.

In civil government, prudence and fortitude do differ, and yet these two virtues are so joined together, that they cannot easily be severed. Now, fortitude is a constancy of mind, which is not discouraged in adversity, but endureth valiantly, and waiteth for better things. But if fortitude be not guided by prudence, it is but temerity and rashness. On the other side, if fortitude be not joined with prudence, that prudence is but vain and unprofitable. Therefore, like as in policy, prudence is but vain without fortitude, even so in divinity faith without hope is nothing; for hope endureth adversity, and is constant therein, and in the end overcometh all evils. And on the other side, like as fortitude without prudence is rashness, even so hope without faith is a presumption in spirit, and a tempting of God; for it hath no knowledge of Christ and of the truth which faith teacheth, and therefore it is but a blind rashness and arrogancy. Wherefore a godly man, afore all things, must have a right understanding instructed by faith, according to the which the mind may be guided in afflictions, that it may hope for those good things which faith hath revealed and taught.

To be short, faith is conceived by teaching: for thereby the mind is instructed what the truth is. Hope is conceived by exhortation; for by exhortation hope is stirred up in afflictions, which confirmeth him that is already

justified by faith, that he be not overcome by adversities, but that he may be able more strongly to resist them. Notwithstanding, if the spark of faith should not give light to the will, it could not be persuaded to lay hold upon hope. We have faith then, whereby we are taught, we understand and know the heavenly wisdom, apprehend Christ, and continue in his grace. But, as soon as we lay hold upon Christ by faith, and confess him, forthwith our enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, rise up against us, hating and persecuting us most cruelly, both in body and spirit. Wherefore we thus believing, and justified by faith in spirit, do wait for the hope of our righteousness; and we wait through patience, for we see and feel the flat contrary. For the world, with his prince the devil, assaileth us mightily both within and without. Moreover, sin yet still remaineth in us, which driveth us into heaviness. Notwithstanding we give not over for all this, but raise up our mind strongly through faith, which lighteneth, teacheth, and guideth the same. And thus we abide firm and constant, and overcome all adversities through him which hath loved us, until our righteousness, which we believe and wait for, be revealed. By faith therefore we began, by hope we continue, and by revelation we shall obtain the whole. In the mean time, whilst we live here, because we believe, we teach the word, and publish the knowledge of Christ unto others. Thus doing, we suffer persecution (according to this text, I believed, and therefore did I speak, and I was sore troubled, Psalm cxvi. 10.) with patience, being strengthened and encouraged through hope; whereunto the scripture exhorteth us with most sweet and comfortable promises taught and revealed unto us by faith. And thus doth hope spring up and increase in us (Rom. xv.). That through patience and comfort of the scripture we may have hope. Paul, therefore, not without cause, joineth patience in tribulations, and hope together, in the 5th and 8th to the Romans, and in other places also, for by them hope is stirred up. But faith (as also I have shewed before) goeth before hope; for it is the beginning of life, and beginneth before all tribulation; for it learneth Christ, and apprehendeth him, without the cross. Notwithstanding the knowledge of Christ cannot be long without the cross, without troubles and conflicts. In this case the mind must be stirred up to a fortitude of

spirit (for hope is nothing else but a spiritual fortitude, as faith is nothing else but a spiritual prudence), which consisteth in suffering, according to this saying, That through patience, &c. These three things then dwell together in the faithful: faith, which teacheth the truth, and defendeth from errors; hope, which endureth and overcometh all adversities, as well bodily as ghostly; and charity, which worketh all good things, as it followeth in the text. And so is a man entire and perfect in this life, as well within as without, until the righteousness be revealed which he waiteth for; and this shall be a perfect and everlasting righteousness.

Moreover, this place containeth both a singular doctrine and consolation. As touching the doctrine, it sheweth, that we are made righteous, not by the works, sacrifices, or ceremonies of Moses's law, much less by the works and traditions of men, but by Christ alone. Whatsoever is in us besides him is of the flesh and not of the spirit. Whatsoever then the world counteth to be good and holy without Christ, is nothing else but sin, error, and flesh. Wherefore circumcision and the observation of the law; also works, religions, and vows of the monks, and of all such as trust in their own righteousness, are altogether carnal. But we (saith Paul) are far above all these things in the spirit and inward man: for we possess Christ by faith, and in the midst of our afflictions through hope we wait for that righteousness which we possess already by faith.

The comfort is this: that in serious conflicts and terrors, wherein the feeling of sin, heaviness of spirit, desperation, and such like, is very strong (for they enter deeply into the heart, and mightily assail it), thou must not follow thine own feeling. For if thou do, thou wilt say: I feel the horrible terrors of the law and the tyranny of sin, not only rebelling against me, but also subduing and leading me captive, and I feel no comfort or righteousness at all. Therefore I am a sinner, and not righteous. If I be a sinner, then am I guilty of everlasting death. But against this feeling thou must wrestle, and say: Although I feel myself utterly overwhelmed and swallowed up with sin, and my heart telleth me that God is offended and angry with me, yet in very deed it is not true, but that mine own sense and feeling so judgeth. The word of God (which in these terrors I ought to follow,

and not mine own sense), teacheth a far other thing, namely, That God is near unto them that are of a troubled heart, and saveth them that are of an humble spirit (Psalm xxxiv. 18.). Also, He despiseth not an humble and a contrite heart (Psalm li. 17.). Moreover, Paul sheweth here, that they which are justified in spirit by faith, do not yet feel the hope of righteousness, but wait still for it.

Wherefore, when the law accuseth and sin terrifieth thee, and thou feelest nothing but the wrath and judgment of God, despair not for all that, but take unto thee the armour of God, the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, and the sword of the spirit, and try how good and how valiant a warrior thou art. Lay hold of Christ by faith, who is the Lord of the law and sin, and of all things else which accompany them. Believing in him thou art justified: which thing reason, and the feeling of thine own heart when thou art tempted, do not tell thee, but the word of God. Moreover, in the midst of these conflicts and terrors which often return and exercise thee, wait thou patiently through hope for righteousness, which thou hast now by faith, although it be yet but begun and imperfect, until it be revealed and made perfect in the kingdom of heaven.

But thou wilt say, I feel not myself to have any righteousness; or at the least, I feel it but very little. Thou must not feel, but believe that thou hast righteousness. And except thou believe that thou art righteous, thou dost great injury unto Christ, who hath cleansed thee by the washing of water through the word (Eph. v. 26.). who also died upon the cross, condemned sin, and killed death, that through him thou mightest obtain righteousness and everlasting life (1 Cor. xv. 3.). These things thou canst not deny (except thou wilt openly shew thyself to be wicked and blasphemous against God, and utterly to despise God; and all his promises, Jesus Christ with all his benefits), and so consequently thou canst not deny but that thou art righteous.

Let us learn, therefore, in great and horrible terrors, when our conscience feeleth nothing but sin, and judgeth that God is angry with us, and that Christ hath turned his face from us, not to follow the sense and feeling of our own heart, but to stick to the word of God, which saith that God is not angry, but looketh to the afflicted, and

to such as are troubled in spirit and tremble at his word (Isaiah lxvi. 2.), and that Christ turneth not himself away from such as labour and are heavy laden, but refresheth and comforteth them (Matt. xi. 28.). This place, therefore, teacheth plainly, that the law and works bring us unto no righteousness or comfort at all; but this doth the Holy Ghost only in the faith of Christ, who raiseth up hope in terrors and tribulations, which endureth and overcometh all adversities. Very few there be that know how weak and feeble faith and hope are under the cross, and in the conflict. For it seemeth they are but a smoking flax, which is ready by-and-by to be put out with a vehement wind (Isaiah xli. 3.). But the faithful, who believe in the midst of these assaults and terrors, hoping against hope, that is to say, fighting through faith in the promise as touching Christ, against the feeling of sin and of the wrath of God, do afterwards find, by experience, that the spark of faith, being very little (as it appeareth to natural reason, for reason can scarcely feel it) is as a mighty fire, and swalloweth up all our sins and all our errors.

There is nothing more dear or precious in all the world, to the true children of God, than this doctrine. For they that understand this doctrine do know that whereof all the world is ignorant, namely, that sin, death, and all other miseries, afflictions, and calamities, as well corporal as spiritual, do turn to the benefit and profit of the elect. Moreover, they know that God is then most dear unto them, when he seemeth to be farthest off, and that he is then a most merciful and loving saviour, when he seemeth to be most angry, to afflict, and to destroy (2 Cor. vi. 10.). Also, they know that they have an everlasting righteousness, which they wait for through hope, as a certain and sure possession laid up for them in heaven; even when they feel the horrible terrors of sin and death. Moreover that they are then lords of all things, when they are most destitute of all things, according to that saying, Having nothing, and yet possessing all things. This, saith the scripture, is to conceive comfort through hope. But this cunning is not learned without great and often temptations.

Verse 6. For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, neither uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.

That is to say, faith which is not feigned nor hypocritical, but true and lively. This is that faith which exerciseth and requireth good works through love. It is as much as to say, He that will be a true Christian indeed, or one of Christ's kingdom, must be a true believer. Now he believeth not truly, if works of charity follow not his faith. So on both hands, as well on the right hand as on the left, he shutteth hypocrites out of Christ's kingdom. On the left hand he shutteth out the Jews, and all such as will work their own salvation, saying, In Christ neither circumcision, that is to say, no works, no service, no worshipping, no kind of life in the world, but faith, without any trust in works or merits, availeth before God. On the right hand he shutteth out all slothful and idle persons, which say, If faith justify without works, then let us work nothing, but let us only believe, and do what we list. Not so, ye enemies of grace. Paul saith otherwise. And although it be true that only faith justifieth, yet he speaketh here of faith in another respect, that is to say, that after it hath justified, it is not idle, but occupied and exercised in working through love. Paul therefore, in this place, setteth forth the whole life of a Christian man, namely, that inwardly it consisteth in faith towards God, and outwardly in charity and good works towards our neighbour. So that a man is a perfect Christian inwardly through faith before God, who hath no need of our works, and outwardly before men, whom our faith profiteth nothing, but our charity or our works. Therefore, when we have heard or understood of this form of Christian life, to wit, that it is faith and charity (as I have said), it is not yet declared what faith or what charity is; for this is another question. For as touching faith, or the inward nature, force and use of faith he hath spoken before, where he shewed, that it is our righteousness, or rather our justification before God. Here he joineth it with charity and works, that is to say, he speaketh of the external office thereof, which is to stir us up to do good works, and to bring forth in us the fruits of charity to the profit of our neighbour.

Verse 7. *Ye did run well: who did let you that ye did not obey the truth?*

These are plain words. Paul affirmeth that he teacheth them the truth, and the self-same thing that he taught them before, and that they ran well so long as they obeyed the truth, that is, they believed and lived rightly; but now they did not so, since they were misled by the false apostles. Moreover, he useth here a new kind of speech, in calling the Christian life a course or a race. For among the Hebrews, to run or to walk signifieth as much as to live or to be conversant. The teachers do run when they teach purely, and the hearers or learners do run when they receive the word with joy, and when the fruits of the spirit do follow. Which thing was done as long as Paul was present, as he witnessed before in the third and fourth chapters. And here he saith, *Ye did run well*, that is to say, all things went forward well and happily among you, ye lived very well, ye went on the right way to everlasting life, which the word of God promised you, &c.

These words, *Ye did run well*, contain in them a singular comfort. This temptation oftentimes exerciseth the godly, that their life seemeth unto them to be rather a certain slow creeping than a running. But if they abide in sound doctrine, and walk in the spirit, let this nothing trouble them, though their doings seem to go slowly forward, or rather creep. God judgeth far otherwise. For that which seemeth unto us to be very slow and scarcely to creep, runneth swiftly in God's sight. Again, that which is to us nothing else but sorrow, mourning, and death, is before God joy, mirth, and true happiness. Therefore Christ saith, Blessed are ye that mourn and weep, for ye shall receive comfort (Matt. v. 4.): ye shall laugh, &c. (Luke vi. 21.). All things shall turn to the best to them which believe in the Son of God, be it sorrow, or be it death itself. Therefore they be true runners indeed, and whatsoever they do, it runneth well, and goeth happily forward by the furtherance of God's spirit, which cannot skill of slow proceedings.

Verse 7. *Who did let you, that you did not obey the truth?*

They are hindered in this course which fall away from faith and grace to the law and works; as it happened to the Galatians, being misled and seduced by the false apostles, whom covertly he reprehendeth with these words: Who did let you, that you did not obey the truth? In like manner he said before in the third chapter, Who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth? And here Paul sheweth by the way, that men are so strongly bewitched with false doctrine, that they embrace lies and heresies in the stead of the truth and spiritual doctrine. And on the other side they say and swear, that the sound doctrine which before they loved is erroneous, and that their error is sound doctrine, maintaining and defending the same with all their power. Even so the false apostles brought the Galatians (which ran well at the beginning) into this opinion, to believe that they erred, and went very slowly forward when Paul was their teacher. But afterwards they, being seduced by the false apostles, and falling clean away from the truth, were so strongly bewitched with their false persuasion, that they thought themselves to be in an happy state, and that they ran very well. The same happeneth at this day to such as are seduced by the sectaries and fantastical spirits. Therefore I am wont to say, that falling in doctrine cometh not of man, but of the devil, and is most perilous, to wit, even from the high heaven to the bottom hell. For they that continue in error are so far off from acknowledging their sin, that they maintain the same to be high righteousness. Wherefore it is impossible for them to obtain pardon.

Verse 8. *It is not the persuasion of him that calleth you.*

This is a great consolation and a singular doctrine, whereby Paul sheweth how the false persuasion of such as are deceived by wicked teachers, may be rooted out of their hearts. The false apostles were jolly fellows, and in outward appearance far passing Paul both in learning and godliness. The Galatians, being deceived with this goodly shew, supposed that when they heard them they heard Christ himself, and therefore they judged their persuasion to be of Christ. Contrariwise, Paul sheweth that this persuasion and doctrine was not of Christ, who had

called them in grace, but of the devil; and by this means he won many of them from this false persuasion. Likewise we at this day revoke many from error that were seduced, when we shew that their opinions are fantastical, wicked, and full of blasphemies.

Again, this consolation pertaineth to all those that are afflicted, which, through temptation, conceive a false opinion of Christ. For the devil is a marvellous persuader, and knoweth how to amplify the least sin, yea a very trifle in such sort, that he which is tempted shall think it to be a most heinous and horrible crime, and worthy of eternal damnation. Here the troubled conscience must be comforted and raised up in such sort as Paul raised up the Galatians, to wit, that this cogitation or persuasion cometh not of Christ, forasmuch as it fighteth against the word of the gospel, which painteth out Christ, not as an accuser, a cruel exactor, &c. but as a meek, humble-hearted, and a merciful saviour and comforter.

But if Satan (who is a cunning workman, and will leave no way unassayed) overthrow this, and lay against thee the word and example of Christ in this wise: true it is that Christ is meek, gentle, and merciful, but to those which are holy and righteous: contrariwise, to the sinners he threateneth wrath and destruction (Luke xiii.). Also he pronounced that the unbelievers are damned already (John iii.). Moreover, Christ wrought many good works: he suffered also many evils, and commandeth us to follow his example: but thy life is neither according to Christ's word nor his example: for thou art a sinner, and there is no faith in thee: yea, thou hast done no good at all; and therefore those sentences which set forth Christ as a severe judge, do belong to thee, and not those comfortable sentences which shew him to be a loving and a merciful saviour, &c. Here let him that is tempted comfort himself after this manner:

The scripture setteth out Christ unto us two manner of ways: first, as a gift. If I take hold of him in this sort I can want nothing. For in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. ii. 3.). He, with all that is in him, is made unto me of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30.). Therefore, although I have committed both many and grievous sins, yet notwithstanding, if I believe in him, they shall all be swallowed up by his righteous-

ness. Secondly, the scripture setteth him forth as an example to be followed. Notwithstanding, I will not suffer this Christ (I mean, as he is an example) to be set before me, but only in the time of joy and gladness, when I am out of temptation (where I can scarcely follow the thousandth part of his example), that I may have him as a mirror to behold and view how much is yet wanting in me, that I become not secure and careless. But in the time of tribulation I will not hear nor admit Christ, but as a gift, who dying for my sins, hath bestowed upon me his righteousness, and hath done and accomplished that for me which was wanting in my life: for he is the end and fulfilling of the law unto righteousness to every one that believeth (Rom. x. 4.).

It is good to know these things, not only to the end that every one of us may have a sure and a certain remedy in the time of temptation, whereby we may eschew that venom of desperation, wherewith Satan thinketh to poison us: but also to the end we may be able to resist the furious sectaries and schismatics of our time. For the Anabaptists count nothing more glorious in their whole doctrine, than that they so severely urge the example of Christ and the cross; especially seeing the sentences are manifest, wherein Christ commendeth the cross to his disciples. We must learn therefore how we may withstand this Satan, transforming himself into the likeness of an angel. Which we shall do, if we make a difference between Christ set forth unto us sometimes as a gift, and sometimes as an example. The preaching of him both ways hath his convenient time, which, if it be not observed, the preaching of salvation may be turned into poison. Christ therefore must be set forth unto those which are already cast down and bruised through the heavy burden and weight of their sins, as a saviour and a gift, and not as an example of a law-giver. But to those that are secure and obstinate, he must be set forth as an example. Also the hard sentences of the scripture, and the horrible examples of the wrath of God must be laid before them; as of the drowning of the whole world, of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and such other like, that they may repent. Let every Christian, therefore, when he is terrified and afflicted, learn to cast away the false persuasion which he hath conceived of Christ, and let him say, O cursed Satan, why dost thou

now dispute with me of doing and working, seeing I am terrified and afflicted for my sins already? Nay rather, seeing I now labour and am heavy laden (Matt. xi. 28.). I will not hearken to thee, which art an accuser and a destroyer, but to Christ the saviour of mankind, which saith, that he came into the world to save sinners, to comfort such as are in terror, anguish, and desperation, and to preach deliverance to the captives, &c. This is the true Christ, and there is none other but he. I can seek examples of holy life in Abraham, Isaiah, John Baptist, Paul, and other saints; but they cannot forgive my sins, they cannot deliver me from the power of the devil and from death, they cannot save me, and give me everlasting life. For these things belong to Christ alone, whom God the Father hath sealed (John vi. 27.); therefore I will not hear thee, nor acknowledge thee for my teacher, O Satan, but Christ, of whom the Father hath said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him. Let us learn in this wise to comfort ourselves through faith in temptation, and in the persuasion of false doctrine; else the devil will either seduce us by his ministers, or kill us with his fiery darts.

Verse 9. A little leaven doth leaven the whole lump.

This whole epistle sufficiently witnesseth how Paul was grieved with the fall of the Galatians, and how often he beat into their heads (sometimes chiding and sometimes intreating them) the exceeding great and horrible enormities that should ensue upon this their fall, unless they repented. This fatherly and apostolical care and admonition of Paul moved some of them nothing at all; for many of them acknowledged Paul no more for their teacher, but preferred the false apostles far above him, of whom they thought themselves to have received the true doctrine, and not of Paul. Moreover, the false apostles, no doubt, slandered Paul among the Galatians, saying that he was an obstinate and a contentious fellow, which for a light matter would break the unity of the churches, and for no other cause but that he alone would be counted wise and be magnified of them. Through this false accusation they made Paul very odious unto many.

Some other, which had not yet utterly forsaken his

doctrine, thought that there was no danger in dissenting a little from him in the doctrine of justification and faith. Wherefore, when they heard that Paul made so heinous a matter of that which seemed unto them to be but light and of small importance, they marvelled, and thus they thought with themselves: Be it so that we have swerved something from the doctrine of Paul, and that there hath been some fault in us; yet that being but a small matter, he ought to wink thereat, or at least not so vehemently to amplify it, lest, by the occasion thereof, the concord of the churches should be broken. Whereunto he answereth with this sentence: A little leaven leaveneth [or maketh sour] the whole lump of dough. And this is a caveat or an admonition which Paul standeth much upon. And we also ought greatly to esteem the same at this day. For our adversaries in like manner object against us that we are contentious, obstinate, and intractable in defending our doctrine, and even in matters of no great importance. But these are the crafty fetches of the devil, whereby he goeth about utterly to overthrow our doctrine. To this we answer therefore with Paul, that a little leaven maketh sour the whole lump.

In philosophy, a small fault in the beginning is a great and a foul fault in the end. So in divinity, one little error overthroweth the whole doctrine. Wherefore we must separate life and doctrine far asunder. The doctrine is not ours; but God's, whose ministers only we are called: therefore we may not change or diminish one tittle thereof. The life is ours; therefore, as touching that, we are ready to do, to suffer, to forgive, &c. whatsoever our adversaries shall require of us, so that faith and doctrine may remain sound and uncorrupt; of the which we say always with Paul, A little leaven leaveneth, &c.

A small mote in the eye hurteth the eye. And our Saviour Christ saith: The light of the body is the eye; therefore, when thine eye is single, then is thy whole body light; but if thine eye be evil, then thy body is dark. Again, If thy body shall have no part dark, then shall all be light (Luke xi. 34, 36.). By this allegory Christ signifieth that the eye, that is to say, the doctrine, ought to be most simple, clear, and sincere, having in it no darkness, no cloud, &c. And James the apostle saith: He that faileth in one point is guilty of all. This place therefore maketh

very much for us against these cavillers which say that we break charity to the great hurt and damage of the churches. But we protest that we desire nothing more than to be at unity with all men : so that they leave unto us the doctrine of faith entire and uncorrupt ; to the which all things ought to give place, be it charity, an apostle, or an angel from heaven.

Let us suffer them therefore to extol charity and concord as much as they list; but on the other side, let us magnify the majesty of the word and faith. Charity may be neglected in time and place without any danger ; but so cannot the word and faith be. Charity suffereth all things, giveth place to all men. Contrariwise, faith suffereth nothing, giveth place to no man. Charity in giving place, in believing, in giving and forgiving, is oftentimes deceived, and yet notwithstanding being so deceived, it suffereth no loss which is to be called true loss indeed, that is to say, it loseth not Christ: therefore it is not offended, but continueth still constant in well doing, yea, even towards the unthankful and unworthy. Contrariwise, in the matter of faith and salvation, when men teach lies and errors under the colour of the truth, and seduce many, here hath charity no place: for here we lose not any benefit bestowed upon the unthankful, but we lose the word, faith, Christ, and everlasting life. Let it not move us therefore that they urge so much the keeping of charity and concord; for whoso loveth not God and his word, it is no matter what or how much he loveth.

Paul, therefore, by this sentence admonisheth as well teachers as hearers, to take heed that they esteem not the doctrine of faith as a light matter, wherewith they may dally at their pleasure. It is a bright sun-beam coming down from heaven, which lighteneth, directeth, and guideth us. Now, like as the world, with all his wisdom and power, is not able to stop or turn away the beams of the sun coming down from heaven unto the earth; even so can there be nothing added to the doctrine of faith, or taken from it; for that is an utter defacing and overthrowing of the whole.

Verse 10. *I have trust in you through the Lord.*

As if he would say: I have taught, admonished, and reproved you enough, so that ye would hearken unto me. Notwithstanding I hope well of you in the Lord. Here riseth a question, whether Paul doth well when he saith he hath a good hope or trust of the Galatians, seeing the holy scripture forbiddeth any trust to be put in men. Both faith and charity have their trust and belief, but after divers sorts, by reason of the diversity of their objects. Faith trusteth in God, and therefore it cannot be deceived; charity believeth man, and therefore it is often deceived. Now, this faith that springeth of charity is so necessary to this present life, that without it life cannot continue in the world. For if one man should not believe and trust another, what life should we live upon earth? The true Christians do sooner believe and give credit through charity, than the children of this world do. For faith towards men is a fruit of the spirit, or of Christian faith in the godly. Hereupon Paul had a trust in the Galatians, yea though they were fallen from his doctrine: but yet in the Lord. As if he should say: I have a trust in you so far forth as the Lord is in you, and ye in him; that is to say, so far forth as ye abide in the truth; from which if you fall away, seduced by the ministers of Satan, I will not trust unto you any more. Thus it is lawful for the godly to trust and believe men.

Verse 10. *That ye will be none otherwise minded.*

To wit, concerning doctrine and faith, than I have taught you, and ye have learned of me: that is to say, I have a good hope of you, that ye will not receive any other doctrine which shall be contrary to mine.

Verse 10. *But he that troubleth you shall bear his condemnation, whosoever he be.*

By this sentence Paul, as it were a judge sitting upon the judgment-seat, condemneth the false apostles, calling them by a very odious name, troublers of the Galatians, whom they esteemed to be very godly men, and far better teachers than Paul. And withal he goeth about to terrify

the Galatians with this horrible sentence, whereby he so boldly condemneth the false apostles, to the end that they should fly their false doctrine as a most dangerous plague. As if he should say, What mean ye to give ear to those pestilent fellows, which teach you not, but only trouble you? The doctrine that they deliver unto you is nothing else but a trouble unto your consciences. Wherefore, how great soever they be, they shall bear their condemnation.

Now, a man may understand by these words, Who-soever he be, that the false apostles in outward appearance were very good and holy men. And peradventure there was amongst them some notable disciple of the apostles of great name and authority. For it is not without cause that he useth such vehement and pithy words. He speaketh after the same manner also in the first chapter, saying: If we, or an angel from heaven, preach unto you otherwise than we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. And it is not to be doubted but that many were offended with this vehemency of the apostle, thinking thus with themselves: Wherefore doth Paul break charity? Why is he so obstinate in so small a matter? Why doth he so rashly pronounce sentence of eternal damnation against those that are ministers as well as he? He passeth nothing of all this, but proceedeth on still, and boldly curseth and condemneth all those that pervert the doctrine of faith, be they never so highly esteemed, seem they never so holy and learned.

Wherefore (as I give often warning), we must diligently discern between doctrine and life. Doctrine is heaven, life is the earth. In life is sin, error, uncleanness, and misery, mingled with vinegar, as the proverb saith. There let charity wink, forbear, be beguiled, believe, hope, and suffer all things: there let forgiveness of sins prevail as much as may be, so that sin and error be not defended and maintained. But in doctrine like as there is no error, so it hath no need of pardon. Wherefore there is no comparison between doctrine and life. One little point of doctrine is of more value than heaven and earth: and therefore we cannot abide to have the least jot thereof to be corrupted. But we can very well wink at the offences and errors of life. For we also do daily err in life and coversation, yea all the saints err; and this do they earnestly confess in the Lord's prayer, and in the

articles of our faith. But our doctrine, blessed be God, is pure; we have all the articles of our faith grounded upon the holy scripture. Those the devil would gladly corrupt and overthrow. Therefore he assaileth us so craftily with this goodly argument, that we ought not to break charity and the unity of the churches.

Verse 11. And brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the slander of the cross abolished.

Paul labouring by all means possible to call the Galatians back again, reasoneth now by his own example. I have procured to myself (saith he) the hatred and persecution of the priests and elders (Acts xiii. 50.) and of my whole nation, because I take away righteousness from circumcision; which, if I would attribute unto it, the Jews would not only cease to persecute me, but also would love and highly commend me. But now, because I preach the gospel of Christ and the righteousness of faith, abolishing the law and circumcision, therefore I suffer persecution. Contrariwise, the false apostles, to avoid the cross and this deadly hatred of the Jewish nation, do preach circumcision; and by this means they obtain and retain the favour of the Jews: as he saith in the sixth chapter following: They compel you to be circumcised, &c. Moreover, they would gladly bring to pass, that there should be no dissension, but peace and concord between the Gentiles and the Jews. But that is impossible to be done without the loss of the doctrine of faith, which is the doctrine of the cross, and full of offences. Wherefore when he saith: If I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the slander of the cross abolished: he meaneth that it were a great absurdity and inconveniency, if the offence of the cross should cease. After the same manner he speaketh, Christ sent me to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect (1 Cor. i.). As if he said, I would not that the offence and cross of Christ should be abolished.

Here may some man say: The Christians then are mad men, to cast themselves into danger of their own accord: for what do they else by preaching and confessing the truth, but procure unto themselves the hatred and

enmity of the whole world, and raise offences? This, saith Paul, doth nothing at all offend or trouble me, but maketh me more bold, and causeth me to hope well of the happy success and increase of the church, which flourisheth and groweth under the cross; for it behoveth that Christ, the head and spouse of the church, should reign in the midst of all his enemies (Psalm cx.). On the contrary part, when the cross is abolished, and the rage of tyrants and heretics ceaseth on the one side, and offences on the other side, and all things are in peace, the devil keepeth the entry of the house, this is a sure token that the pure doctrine of God's word is taken away.

Bernard, considering this thing, saith, that the church is then in best state when Satan assaileth it on every side, as well by subtil slights as by violence; and contrariwise, that it is then in worst case when it is most at ease; and he allegeth very well and to the purpose that sentence of Ezekiah in his song, Behold for felicity I had bitter grief (Isaiah xxxviii. 17.), applying it to the church living in ease and quietness. Wherefore Paul taketh it for a most certain sign that it is not the gospel, if it be preached in peace. Contrariwise, the world taketh it for a most certain sign that the gospel is heretical and seditious doctrine, because it seeth great uproars, tumults, offences, and sects, and such like, to follow the preaching thereof. Thus God sometimes sheweth himself in the similitude of the devil, and the devil likewise sheweth himself in the likeness of God; and God will be known under the similitudes of the devil, and will have the devil known under the likeness of God.

The cross immediately followeth the doctrine of the word, according to that saying, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; and I was sore troubled (Psalm cxvi.). Now the cross of Christians is persecution with reproach and ignominy, and without any compassion, and therefore it is very offensive. First, they suffer as the vilest people in the world; and so did the prophet Isaiah foreshew even of Christ himself—He was reputed amongst the wicked (Isaiah liii.). Moreover, murderers and thieves have their punishments qualified, and men have compassion on them. Here is no offence or slander joined with the punishment. Contrariwise, like as the world judgeth the Christians to be of all other men the most pestilent and pernicious, so doth it think that no

torments are sufficient to punish them for their heinous offences. Neither is it moved with any compassion towards them, but putteth them to the most opprobrious and shameful kinds of death that can be. And it thinketh that it gaineth thereby a double commodity. For first, it imagineth that it doth high service unto God in killing of them (John xvi. 23.). Secondly, that the common peace and tranquillity is restored and established by taking away such noisome plagues. Therefore the death and cross of the faithful is full of offences. But let not this reproachful dealing (saith Paul) and the continuance of Christ's cross and offence thereof move you, but rather let it confirm you. For as long as the cross endureth, it shall go well with the gospel.

In like manner Christ also comforteth his disciples in the fifth of Matthew: Blessed are ye (saith he) when men revile you and persecute you, and shall falsely say all manner of evil against you for my name's sake. Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. The church cannot suffer this rejoicing to be wrested from her. Wherefore I would not wish to be at concord with the Pope, the bishops, the princes, and the sectaries, unless they would consent unto our doctrine; for such concord were a certain token that we had lost the true doctrine. To be short, as long as the church teacheth the gospel, it must suffer persecution. For the gospel setteth forth the mercy and glory of God; it discloseth the malice and slights of the devil, painteth him out in his right colours, and plucketh from him the counterfeit visor of God's majesty, whereby he deceiveth the whole world; that is to say, it sheweth that all worshippings, religious orders invented by men, and traditions concerning single life, meats, and such other things, whereby men think to deserve forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, are wicked things and devilish doctrine. There is nothing then that more stirreth up the devil than the preaching of the gospel. For that plucketh from him the dissembled visor of God, and bewrayeth him to be as he is indeed, that is to say, the devil, and not God. Wherefore it cannot be but that as long as the gospel flourisheth, the cross and the offence thereof must needs follow it, or else truly the devil is not rightly touched, but slenderly tickled. But if

he be rightly hit indeed he resteth not, and beginneth horribly to rage and to raise up troubles every where.

If Christians then will hold the word of life, let them not be afraid or offended when they see that the devil is broken loose and rageth every where, that all the world is in an uproar, that tyrants exercise their cruelty, and heresies spring up; but let them assure themselves, that these are signs, not of terror, but of joy, as Christ himself expoundeth them, saying, Rejoice and be glad, &c. God forbid, therefore, that the offence of the cross should be taken away. Which thing should come to pass, if we should preach that which the prince of this world and his members should gladly hear, that is to say, the righteousness of works. Then should we have a gentle devil, a favourable world, a gracious pope, and merciful princes. But because we set forth the benefits and glory of Christ, they persecute and spoil us both of our goods and lives.

Verse 12. *Would to God they were cut off that do disquiet you.*

Is this the part of an apostle, not only to denounce the false apostles to be troublers of the church, to condemn them, and to deliver them to Satan, but also to wish that they might be utterly rooted out and perish? And what is this else but plain cursing? Paul (as I suppose) alludeth here to circumcision. As if he would say, They compel you to cut off the foreskin of your flesh; but I would that they themselves might be utterly cut off by the root.

Here riseth a question, Whether it be lawful for Christians to curse? Why not? Howbeit not always, nor for every cause. But when the matter is come to this point, that God's word must be evil spoken of, and his doctrine blasphemed, and so consequently God himself, then must we turn this sentence and say, Blessed be God and his word, and whatsoever is without God and his word accursed be it, yea though it be an apostle or an angel from heaven. So he said before in the fifth chapter, Although we, or an angel from heaven, preach otherwise unto you than that which we have preached, let him be accursed (Gal. i. 8, 9.)

Hereby it may appear how great a matter Paul made of a little leaven, which for the same durst curse the false apostles, who, in outward appearance, were men of great authority and holiness. Let not us therefore make little account of the leaven of doctrine; for although it be never so little, yet, if it be neglected, it will be the cause that by little and little the truth and our salvation shall be lost, and God himself be denied. For when the word is corrupted, and God denied and blasphemed (which must needs follow if the word be corrupted), there remaineth no hope of salvation. But for our parts, if we be cursed, raised upon, and slain, there is yet one that can raise us up again, and deliver us from the curse, death, and hell.

Wherefore let us learn to advance and extol the majesty and authority of God's word. For it is no small trifle (as brain-sick heads surmise at this day): but every tittle thereof is greater than heaven and earth. Wherefore, in this respect, we have no regard of Christian charity or concord, but we sit as it were on the judgment-seat, that is to say, we curse and condemn all men, which in the least point do deface or corrupt the majesty of God's word; for a little leaven maketh sour the whole lump. But, if they leave us God's word entire and sound, we are not only ready to keep charity and peace with them, but also we offer ourselves to be their servants, and to do for them whatsoever we are able: if not, let them perish, and be cast down into hell; and not only they, but even the whole world also, so that God and his pure word do remain. For as long as he remaineth, life, salvation, and the faithful shall also remain.

Paul therefore doth well in cursing those troublers of the Galatians, and in pronouncing sentence against them, to wit, that they are accursed with all that they teach and do, and in wishing that they might be cut off, especially that they might be rooted out of the church of God, that is, that God should not govern nor prosper their doctrine nor their doings. And this cursing proceedeth from the Holy Ghost. As Peter also, in the 8th of the Acts, curseth Simon the sorcerer: Thy money and thou perish together. And the holy scripture oftentimes useth cursing against such troublers of men's consciences, and chiefly in the Psalms, as, Let death come upon them; let them

go quick into the pit of corruption (Psalm v. 15.). Also, Let sinners be turned down into hell, and all they that forget God.

Hitherto Paul hath fortified the place of justification with strong and mighty arguments. Moreover, to the end he might omit nothing, here and there he hath intermingled chidings, praises, exhortations, threatenings, and such like. In the end he addeth also his own example, namely, that he suffereth persecution for this doctrine, thereby admonishing all the faithful not to be offended nor dismayed when they shall see such uproars, sects, and offences raised up in the time of the gospel, but rather to rejoice and be glad. For the more the world rageth against the gospel, the more the gospel prospereth and goeth happily forwards.

This consolation ought at this day to encourage us; for it is certain that the world hateth and persecuteth us for none other cause, but for that we profess the truth of the gospel. It doth not accuse us for theft, murder, whoredom, and such like; but it detesteth and abhorreth us because we teach Christ faithfully and purely, and give not over the defence of the truth. Therefore, we may be out of all doubt, that this our doctrine is holy and of God, because the world hateth it so bitterly: for, otherwise there is no doctrine so wicked, so foolish, and pernicious, which the world doth not gladly admit, embrace, and defend; and moreover it reverently entertaineth, cherisheth, and flattereth the professors thereof, and doth all that may be done for them. Only the true doctrine of the gospel, life, and salvation, and the ministers thereof, it utterly abhorreth, and worketh all the spite that may be devised against them. It is an evident token, therefore, that the world is so cruelly bent against us for no other thing but because it hateth the world. Wherefore, when our adversaries charge us, that there riseth nothing of this doctrine but wars, seditions, offences, sects, and other such infinite enormities, let us answer, Blessed be the day wherein we may see these things. But the whole world is in an uproar. And well done: for if the world were not so troubled; if the devil did not rage and stir up such broils, we should not have the pure doctrine of the gospel, which cannot be preached but these broils and turmoils must needs follow. Therefore, that which ye count to be a great evil, we take to be a special happiness.

The Doctrine of good works.

Now follow exhortations and precepts of life and good works. For it is the custom of the apostles, after they have taught faith and instructed men's consciences, to add precepts of good works, whereby they exhort the faithful to exercise the duties of charity one towards another; and reason itself, after a sort, teacheth and understandeth this part of doctrine; but as touching the doctrine of faith, it knoweth nothing at all. To the end, therefore, that it might appear that Christian doctrine doth not destroy good works, or fight against civil ordinances, the apostle also exhorteth us to exercise ourselves in good works and in an honest outward conversation, and to keep charity and concord one with another. The world cannot therefore justly accuse the Christians that they destroy good works, that they are troublers of the public peace, civil honesty, &c. For they teach good works and all other virtues better than all the philosophers and magistrates of the world, because they adjoin faith in their doings.

Verse 13. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not your liberty as an occasion unto the flesh, but by love serve one another.

As if he would say: Ye have now obtained liberty through Christ, that is to say, ye be far above all laws as touching conscience and before God: ye be blessed and saved, Christ is your life. Therefore, although the law, sin, and death trouble and terrify you, yet can they not hurt you, nor drive you to despair. And this is your excellent and inestimable liberty. Now standeth it you in hand to take good heed, that ye use not that liberty as an occasion to the flesh.

This evil is common, and the most pernicious of all others that Satan stirreth up in the doctrine of faith, namely, that in very many he turneth this liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free, into the liberty of the flesh. Of this the apostle Jude also complaineth in his epistle—There are crept in certain wicked men (saith he) which turn the grace of our God into wantonness (Jude iv.). For the flesh is utterly ignorant of the doctrine of grace, that is to say, it knoweth not that we are made righteous,

not by works, but by faith only, and that the law hath no authority over us. Therefore, when it heareth the doctrine of faith, it abuseth and turneth it into wantonness, and by-and-by thus it gathereth: If we be without law, let us then live as we list, let us do no good, let us give nothing to the needy, and let us not suffer any evil, for there is no law to constrain us or bind us so to do.

Wherefore there is danger on either side; albeit the one is more tolerable than the other. If grace or faith be not preached, no man can be saved; for it is faith alone that justifieth and saveth. On the other side, if faith be preached (as of necessity it must be), the more part of men understand the doctrine of faith carnally, and draw the liberty of the spirit into the liberty of the flesh. This may we see in all kinds of life, as well of the high as the low. All boast themselves to be professors of the gospel, and all brag of Christian liberty, and yet serving their own lusts, they give themselves to covetousness, pleasures, pride, envy, and such other vices. No man doth his duty faithfully, no man charitably serveth the necessity of his brother. ✓The grief hereof maketh me sometimes so impatient, that many times I wish such swine, which tread precious pearls under their feet, were yet still remaining under the tyranny of the Pope; for it is impossible that this people of Gomorrah should be governed by the gospel of peace.

Moreover, even we which teach the word, do not know our duty with so great zeal and diligence in the light of the gospel, as we did afore in the darkness of ignorance. For the more certain we be of the freedom purchased unto us by Christ, so much the more cold and negligent we be in handling the word, in prayer, in well-doing, and in suffering adversities. And if Satan did not vex us inwardly with spiritual temptation, and outwardly with the persecutions of our adversaries, and moreover with the contempt and ingratitude of our own fellows, we should become utterly careless, negligent, and untoward to all good works; and so in time we should lose the knowledge and faith of Christ, forsake the ministry of the word, and seek an easier kind of life for the flesh. Which thing many of our men begin to do, for that they travelling in the ministry of the word, cannot only not live of their labour, but also are most miserably intreated even of those whom they delivered from the

servile bondage of the Pope by the preaching of the gospel. These men, forsaking poor and offensive Christ, entangle themselves with the affairs of this present life, serving their own bellies and not Christ; but with what fruit, that they shall find by experience in time to come.

Forasmuch then as we know that the devil layeth wait most of all for us that hate the world (for the rest he holdeth in captivity and slavery at his pleasure), and laboureth with might and main to take from us the liberty of the spirit, or at leastwise to turn the same into the liberty of the flesh: we teach and exhort our brethren with singular care and diligence by the example of Paul, that they think not this liberty of the spirit purchased by the death of Christ, to be given unto them, that they should make it an occasion of carnal liberty, or (as Peter saith, 1 Pet. i. 16.) should use the same as a cloak for their wickedness; but that they should serve one another through love.

To the end, therefore, that Christians should not abuse this liberty, as I have said, the apostle layeth a yoke and bondage upon their flesh by the law of mutual love. Wherefore, let the godly remember, that in conscience before God, they be free from the curse of the law, from sin and from death, for Christ's sake; but, as touching the body, they are servants, and must serve one another through charity, according to this commandment of Paul. Let every man therefore endeavour to do his duty diligently in his calling, and to help his neighbour to the uttermost of his power. This is it which Paul here requireth of us: Serve ye one another through love. Which words do not set the Christians at liberty, but shut them under bondage as touching the flesh.

Moreover, this doctrine concerning mutual love, which we must maintain and exercise one towards another, cannot be beaten into the heads of carnal men, nor sink into their hearts. The Christians do gladly receive and obey this doctrine. Others, as soon as liberty is preached, by-and-by do thus infer: If I be free, then may I do what I list; this thing is mine own, why then should I not sell it for as much as I may get? Moreover, seeing we obtain not salvation by our good works, why should we give any thing to the poor? Thus do they most carelessly shake off the yoke and bondage of the flesh, and turn the

liberty of the spirit into wantonness and fleshly liberty. But we will tell such careless contemners (although they believe us not, but laugh us to scorn), that if they use their bodies and their goods after their own lust (as indeed they do, for they neither help the poor nor lend to the needy, but beguile their brethren in bargaining, snatching, and scraping unto themselves by hook or by crook whatsoever they can get), we tell them (I say) that they be not free, brag they never so much of their liberty, but have lost Christ and Christian liberty, are become bond-slaves of the devil, and are seven times worse under the name of Christian liberty, than they were before under the tyranny of the Pope. For the devil, which was driven out of them, hath taken unto him seven other fiends worse than himself, and is returned into them again; therefore the end of these men is worse than the beginning.

As touching us, we have a commandment of God to preach the gospel, which offereth to all men liberty from the law, sin, death, and God's wrath, freely for Christ's sake, if they believe. It is not in our power to conceal or revoke this liberty now published by the gospel; for Christ hath given it unto us freely, and purchased it by his death. Neither can we constrain those swine, which run headlong into all licentiousness and dissoluteness of the flesh, to help other men with their bodies or goods: therefore we do what we can, that is to say, we diligently admonish them that they ought so to do. If we nothing prevail by these admonitions, we commit the matter to God, and he will recompense these scorers with just punishment in his good time. In the mean while this is our comfort, that, as touching the godly, our labour is not lost, of whom many, no doubt, by our ministry, are delivered out of the bondage of the devil, and translated into the liberty of the spirit. These (which notwithstanding are but few) which acknowledge the glory of this liberty of the spirit, and on the other side are ready through charity to serve other men, and know themselves to be debtors to their brethren touching the flesh, do more rejoice us than the innumerable multitude of those that abuse this liberty are able to discourage us.

Paul useth here very apt and plain words when he saith, Brethren, ye are called into liberty. And because no man should dream that he speaketh of the liberty of the

flesh, he expoundeth himself what manner of liberty he meaneth, saying, Only use not your liberty as an occasion to the flesh, but serve ye one another through love. Wherefore let every Christian know, that, as touching the conscience, Christ hath made him lord over the law, sin, and death, so that they have no power over him. Contrariwise, let him know that this outward bondage is laid upon his body, that he should serve his neighbour through love. They that understand Christian liberty otherwise enjoy the commodities of the gospel to their own destruction, and are worse idolators under the name of Christ, than they were before under the Pope. Now Paul goeth about to declare out of the ten commandments what it is to serve one another through love.

Verse 14. *For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, which is this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

Paul, after that he hath once laid the foundation of Christian doctrine, is wont to build gold, silver, and precious stones upon it. Now there is no other foundation, as he himself saith to the Corinthians, than Jesus Christ, or the righteousness of Christ (1 Cor. iii. 11.). Upon this foundation he buildeth now good works, yea good works indeed: all which he comprehendeth in one precept, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. As if he should say, When I say that ye must serve one another through love, I mean the same thing that the law saith in another place: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Lev. xix. 8.) And this is truly to interpret the scripture and God's commandments.

Now, in giving precepts of love, he covertly toucheth by the way the false teachers, against whom he setteth himself mightily, that he may defend and stablish his doctrine of good works against them. As if he said, O ye Galatians, I have hitherto taught you the true and spiritual life, and now also I will teach you what be good works indeed. And this will I do to the end ye may know that the vain and foolish works of ceremonies, which the false apostles do only urge, are far inferior to the works of charity. For such is the foolishness and madness of all wicked teachers and fantastical spirits, that not only they leave the true foundation and pure doctrine, but also continuing always in their superstitions, they never attain to good works. Therefore (as Paul saith,

1 Cor. iii. 12, 13.), they build nothing but wood, hay, and stubble upon the foundation. So the false apostles, which were the most earnest defenders of works, did not teach or require the works of charity, as that Christians should love one another; that they should be ready to help their neighbours in all necessities, not only with their goods, but also with their body, that is to say, with tongue, hand, heart, and with their whole strength; but only they required that circumcision should be kept, that days, months, years, and times should be observed (Gal. iv. 10.). And other good works they could teach none. For after they had destroyed the foundation, which is Christ, and darkened the doctrine of faith, it was impossible that there could remain any true use, exercise, or opinion of good works. Take away the tree, and the fruit must needs perish.

¶ The apostle, therefore, diligently exhorteth the Christians to exercise themselves in good works, after that they have heard and received the pure doctrine of faith. For the remnants of sin do yet still remain even in those that be justified; which, as they are contrary to faith and hinder it, so do they hinder us from doing good works. Moreover, man's reason and the flesh, which in the saints themselves resisteth the spirit, and in the wicked doth mightily reign, is naturally delighted with pharisaical superstition; that is to say, it taketh more pleasure in measuring God by her own imagination, than by his word, and doth the works that she herself hath chosen, with far greater zeal than those which God hath commanded. Wherefore it is necessary, that the godly preachers should as diligently teach and urge the doctrine of good works as the doctrine of faith; for Satan is a deadly enemy to both. Notwithstanding faith must first be planted; for without faith it is impossible to understand what a good work is, or what pleaseth God.

Let no man think therefore that he thoroughly knoweth this commandment—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Indeed it is very short and easy as touching the words; but shew me the teachers and hearers, that in teaching, learning, and living do exercise and accomplish it rightly. Therefore these words, Serve ye one another through love: and these also, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, are full of spirit, and none of the faithful

do sufficiently consider, urge, and exercise the same. And (which is wonderful) the faithful have this temptation, that if they omit never so slight a matter which they ought to do, by-and-by their conscience is wounded: but they are not so troubled if they neglect the duties of charity (as daily they do), or bear not a sincere and brotherly love and affection towards their neighbour. For they do not so much regard the commandment of charity, as their own superstitions, from the which they be not altogether free during this life.

Paul therefore reprehendeth the Galatians in these words: For the whole law is fulfilled in one word. As if he said: Ye are drowned in your superstitions and ceremonies concerning places and times, which profit neither yourselves nor others; and in the mean while ye neglect charity, which ye ought only to have kept. What madness is this? So saith Jerom: We wear and consume our bodies with watching, fasting, and labour, but we neglect charity, which is the only lady and mistress of works. And this may be well seen in the monks, who straitly observe the traditions concerning their ceremonies, fasting, watching, apparel, and such like. In this case, if they omit any thing, be it never so little, they sin deadly. But when they do not only neglect charity, but also hate one another to the death, they sin not, nor offend God at all.

Therefore by this commandment Paul not only teacheth good works, but also condemneth fantastical and superstitious works. He not only buildeth gold, silver, and precious stones upon the foundation, but also throweth down the wood, and burneth up the hay and stubble. God witnessed by examples in the Old Testament how much he did always esteem of charity, whereunto he would have the very law itself, and the ceremonies thereof to give place. At such time as David and they that were with him were hungry, and had not what to eat, they did eat the holy shew-bread, which by the law the lay-people might not eat, but only the priests (1 Sam. xxi. 6.). Christ's disciples brake the sabbath in plucking the ears of corn; yea and Christ himself brake the sabbath (as said the Jews) in healing the sick on the sabbath-day (Matt. xii. 3, 10.). All these things shew that charity or love ought to be preferred before all laws

and ceremonies, and that God requireth nothing so much at our hands as love towards our neighbour. The same thing Christ also witnesseth, when he saith, And the second is like unto this (Matt. xxii. 39.).

Verse 14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word.

As if he said: Why do ye burden yourselves with the law? Why do ye so toil and turmoil yourselves about the ceremonies of the law, about meats, days, places, and such other things: as how ye ought to eat, drink, keep your feasts, sacrifice? &c. Leave off these follies, and hearken what I say: All the law is fully comprehended in this one saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. God delighteth not in the observation of the ceremonies of the law, neither hath he any need of them. The only thing that he requireth at your hands is this, that ye believe in Christ whom he hath sent; in whom ye are made perfect, and have all things. But if unto faith, which is the most acceptable service of God, ye will also add laws, then assure yourselves, that all laws are comprehended in this short commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Endeavour yourselves to keep this commandment, which being kept, ye have fulfilled all laws.

Paul is a very good expounder of God's commandments; for he draweth all Moses into a brief sum, shewing that nothing else is contained in all his laws (which are in a manner infinite) but this short sentence, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Natural reason is offended with this baseness and shortness of words: for it is soon said, Believe in Christ. And again, Love thy neighbour as thyself. Therefore it despiseth both the doctrine of faith and true good works. Notwithstanding this base and vile word of faith (as reason taketh it), Believe in Christ, is the power of God to the faithful, whereby they overcome sin, death, the devil, &c.; whereby also they attain salvation and eternal life. Thus, to serve one another through love, that is to instruct him that goeth astray, to comfort him that is afflicted, to raise up him that is weak, to help thy neighbour by all means possible, to bear with his infirmities, to endure troubles, labours, ingratitude, and contempt in the church, and in civil life and conversation to obey the magistrate, to give due ho-

nour to thy parents, to be patient at home with a froward wife and an unruly family, &c. These (I say) are works which reason judgeth to be of no value. But indeed they are such works that the whole world is not able to comprehend the excellency and worthiness thereof (for it doth not measure works or any other thing by the word of God, but by the judgment of wicked, blind, and foolish reason): yea it knoweth not the value of any one of the least good works that can be, which are true good works indeed.

Therefore, when men dream that they know well enough the commandment of charity, they are utterly deceived. Indeed they have it written in their heart: for they naturally judge that a man ought to do unto another as he would another should do unto him. But it followeth not therefore that they understand it; for if they did, they would also perform it indeed, and would prefer love and charity before all their works. They would not so highly esteem their own superstitious toys, as to go with an heavy countenance, hanging down the head, to live unmarried, to live with bread and water, to dwell in the wilderness, to be poorly apparalled, &c. These monstrous and superstitious works, which they have devised and chosen unto themselves, God neither commanding nor approving the same, they esteem to be so holy and so excellent, that they surmount and darken charity, which is as it were the sun of all good works. So great and incomprehensible is the blindness of man's reason, that it is unable, not only to judge rightly of the doctrine of faith, but also of external conversation and works. Wherefore we must fight strongly, as well against the opinions of our own heart (to the which we are naturally more inclined in the matter of salvation than to the word of God), as also against the counterfeited visor and holy shew of our own will-works: that so we may learn to magnify the works which every man doth in his vocation, although they seem outwardly never so base and contemptible, if they have the warrant of God's word; and contrariwise, to despise those works which reason chuseth without the commandment of God, seem they never so excellent and holy.

Of this commandment I have largely intreated in another place, and therefore I will now but lightly over-run it. Indeed this is briefly spoken, Love thy neighbour as

thyself; but yet very aptly and to the purpose. No man can give a more certain, a better or a nearer example than man's own self. Therefore, if thou wouldest know how thy neighbour ought to be loved, and wouldest have a plain example thereof, consider well how thou lovest thyself. If thou shouldest be in necessity or danger, thou wouldest be glad to have the love and friendship of all men, to be holpen with the counsel, the goods, and the strength of all men and of all creatures. Wherefore thou hast no need of any book to instruct and to admonish thee how thou oughtest to love thy neighbour: for thou hast an excellent book of all laws, even in thy heart. Thou needest no school-master in this matter; ask counsel only of thine own heart, and that shall teach thee sufficiently that thou oughtest to love thy neighbour as thyself. Moreover, love or charity is an excellent virtue, which not only maketh a man willing and ready to serve his neighbour with tongue, with hand, with money and worldly goods, but with his body, and even with his life also. And thus to do, it is not provoked by good deserts or any thing else, neither is it hindered through evil deserts or ingratitude. The mother doth therefore nourish and cherish her child, because she loveth it.

Now, my neighbour is every man, specially which hath need of my help, as Christ expoundeth it in the tenth chapter of Luke. Who although he hath done me some wrong, or hurt me by any manner of way: yet notwithstanding he hath not put off the nature of man, or ceased to be flesh and blood, and the creature of God most like unto myself briefly, he ceaseth not to be my neighbour. As long then as the nature of man remaineth in him, so long also remaineth the commandment of love, which requireth at my hand, that I should not despise mine own flesh, nor render evil for evil; but overcome evil with good, or else shall love never be as Paul describeth it (1 Cor. xiii.).

Paul therefore commendeth charity to the Galatians, and to all the faithful (for they only love indeed), and exhorteth them, that through charity one of them should serve another. As if he would say, Ye need not to burden yourselves with circumcision, and with the ceremonies of Moses' law: but above all things continue in the doctrine of faith which ye have received of me. Afterwards, If ye will do good works, I will in one word shew

you the chiefest and greatest works, and how ye shall fulfil all laws: Serve ye one another through love. Ye shall not lack them to whom ye may do good, for the world is full of such as need the help of others. This is a perfect and a sound doctrine of faith and love, and also the shortest and the longest divinity; the shortest as touching the words and sentences; but as touching the use and practice it is more large, more long, more profound, and more high than the world.

Verse 15. *If ye bite and devour one another, take heed lest ye be consumed one of another.*

By these words Paul witnesseth, that if the foundation, that is to say, if faith in Christ be overthrown by wicked teachers, no peace or concord can remain in the church, either in doctrine or life: but there must needs be divers opinions and dissensions from time to time both in doctrine and life, whereby it cometh to pass that one biteth and devoureth another; that is to say, one judgeth and condemneth another, until at length they be consumed. Hereof not only the scripture, but also the examples of all times bear witness. After that Africa was perverted by the Manichees, by-and-by followed the Donatists, who also disagreeing among themselves, were divided into three sundry secis. And how many sects have we at at this day springing up one after another? One sect bringeth forth another, and one condemneth another. Thus, when the unity of the spirit is broken, it is impossible that there should be any concord either in doctrine or life, but daily new errors must needs spring up without measure and without end.

Paul therefore teacheth, that such occasions of discord are to be avoided, and he sheweth how they may be avoided. This (saith he) is the way to unity and concord: Let every man do his duty in that kind of life which God hath called him unto: let him not lift up himself above others, nor find fault at other men's works, and commend his own, but let every one serve another through love. This is a true and simple doctrine touching good works. This do not they teach which have made shipwreck of faith, and have conceived fantastical opinions concerning faith and good works; but disagreeing among themselves as touching the doctrine of faith and works,

they bite and devour, that is to say, they accuse and condemn one another, as Paul here saith of the Galatians: If ye bite and devour one another, take heed lest ye be consumed one of another. As if he would say, Do not accuse and condemn one another for circumcision, for observing of holy days, or other ceremonies, but rather give yourselves to serve and help one another through charity; or else, if ye continue in biting and devouring one another, take heed that ye be not consumed, that is to say, that ye perish not utterly, yea and that bodily, which commonly happeneth, especially to the authors of sects, as it did to Arius and others, and to certain also in our time. For he that hath laid his foundation on the sand, and buildeth hay, stubble, and such like, must needs fall and be consumed; for all those things are ordained for the fire. I will not say, that after such bitings and devourings, the ruin and destruction, not of cities, but of whole countries and kingdoms are wont to follow. Now the apostle sheweth what it is to serve one another through love.

It is a hard and a dangerous matter to teach, that we are made righteous by faith without works, and yet to require works withal. Here, except the ministers of Christ be faithful and wise disposers of the mysteries of God, rightly dividing the word of truth, faith and works are by-and-by confounded. Both these doctrines, as well of faith as of works, must be diligently taught and urged: and yet so that both may remain within their bounds. Otherwise, if they teach works only (as they do in the Pope's kingdom), then is faith lost. If faith only be taught, then carnal men by-and-by dream that works be not needful.

The apostle began a little before to exhort men to good works, and to teach that the whole law was fulfilled in one word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Here will some man say: Paul throughout his whole epistle taketh away righteousness from the law; for saith he, By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified (Gal. ii. 16.). Also, as many as are under the works of the law are under the curse (Gal. iii. 10.). But now when he saith that the whole law is fulfilled in one word, he seemeth to have forgotten the matter whereof he hath entreated in all this epistle, and to be of a quite contrary opinion, to wit, that they which do the works of charity,

fulfil the law, and be righteous. To this objection he answereth after this manner:

Verse 16. *But I say, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the works of the flesh.*

As if he should have said: I have not forgotten my former discourse concerning faith, neither do I now revoke the same in that I exhort you to mutual love, saying, that the whole law is fulfilled through love, but I am still of the same mind and opinion that I was before. To the end therefore that ye may rightly understand me, I add this moreover: Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

A confutation of the argument of the schoolmen: Love is the fulfilling of the law; therefore the law justifieth.

Although Paul speaketh here expressly and plain enough, yet hath he little prevailed; for the schoolmen not understanding this place of Paul, Love is the fulfilling of the law, have gathered out of it after this manner: If love be the fulfilling of the law, it followeth then that love is righteousness; therefore if we love, we be righteous. These profound clerks do argue from the word to the work, from doctrine or precepts to life, after this sort: The law hath commanded love, therefore the work of love followeth out of hand. But this is a foolish consequence, to draw an argument from precepts, and to ground the conclusion upon works.

True it is that we ought to fulfil the law, and to be justified through the fulfilling thereof; but sin hindereth us. Indeed the law prescribeth and commandeth that we should love God with all our heart, &c. and that we should love our neighbour as ourselves; but it followeth not. This is written, therefore it is done: the law commandeth love, therefore we love. There is not one man to be found upon the whole earth, which so loveth God and his neighbour as the law requireth. But in the life to come, where we shall be thoroughly cleansed from all vices and sins, and shall be made as pure and as clear as the sun, we shall love perfectly, and shall be righteous through perfect love. But in this life that purity is hindered by the flesh, for as long as we live, sin remaineth in the flesh, by reason whereof the corrupt love of ourselves

is so mighty, that it far surmounteth the love of God and of our neighbour. In the mean time, notwithstanding, that we may be righteous in this life also, we have Christ the mercy-seat and throne of grace, and because we believe in him, sin is not imputed unto us. Faith therefore is our righteousness in this life. But in the life to come, when we shall be thoroughly cleansed and delivered from all sins and concupiscence, we shall have no more need of faith and hope, but we shall then love perfectly.

It is a great error, therefore, to attribute justification or righteousness to love, which is nothing; or if it be any thing, yet it is not so great that it can pacify God: for love, even in the faithful (as I have said) is imperfect and impure. But no unclean thing shall enter into the kingdom of God (Apoc. xxi. 27.). Notwithstanding, in the mean while, this trust and confidence sustaineth us, that Christ, who alone committed no sin, and in whose mouth was never found any guile, doth overshadow us with his righteousness (Isaiah liii. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 22.). We being covered with this cloud, and shrouded under this shadow, this heaven of remission of sins, and throne of grace, do begin to love and to fulfil the law. Yet for this fulfilling we are not justified nor accepted of God whilst we live here. But when Christ hath delivered up the kingdom to God his Father, and abolished all principality, and God shall be all in all; then shall faith and hope cease, and love shall be perfect and everlasting (1 Cor. xiii.). This thing the popish schoolmen understand not, and therefore when they hear that love is the sum of the whole law, by-and-by they infer, *ergo* the law justifieth. Or, contrariwise, when they read in Paul that faith maketh a man righteous, Yea (say they), faith formed and furnished with charity. But that is not the meaning of Paul, as I have largely declared before.

If we were pure from all sin, and were inflamed with perfect love both towards God and our neighbour, then should we indeed be righteous and holy through love, and God could require no more of us. This is not done in this present life, but is deferred until the life to come. Indeed we receive here the gift and first-fruits of the spirit, so that we begin to love (Rom. viii. 23.), howbeit very slenderly. But, if we loved God truly and perfectly, as the law of God requireth, which saith (Deut. vi. 5.), Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy

soul, and with all thy strength (Matt. xxii. 37.): then should we be as well contented with poverty as with wealth, with pain as with pleasure, and with death as with life; yea, he that could love God truly and perfectly indeed, should not long continue in this life, but should straitway be swallowed up by this charity.

But now man's nature is so corrupt and drowned in sin, that it cannot have any right sense or cogitation of God. It loveth not God, but hateth him deadly. Wherefore, as John saith (1 John iv. 10.), We loved not God, but he loved us, and sent his Son to be a reconciliation for our sins. And as Paul saith before in the second chapter, Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me. And in the fourth chapter, But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, and made under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law. We being redeemed and justified by the Son, begin to love; according to that saying of Paul in the eighth to the Romans, That which was impossible to the law (inasmuch as it was weak because of the flesh), God sending his own Son in the similitude of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, that is, might begin to be fulfilled. They are mere dreams, therefore, which the sophisters and schoolmen have taught concerning the fulfilling the law.

Wherefore Paul sheweth by these words, Walk in the spirit, how he would have that sentence to be understood, where he said, Serve ye one another through love; and again, Love is the fulfilling of the law, &c. As if he should say: When I bid you love one another, this is it that I require of you, that you walk in the spirit. For I know that ye shall not fulfil the law, because sin dwelleth in you as long as ye live, therefore it is impossible that ye should fulfil the law. Notwithstanding, in the meanwhile endeavour yourselves diligently to walk in the spirit, that is, wrestle in spirit against the flesh, and follow spiritual motions, &c.

It appeareth then that he had not forgotten the matter of justification. For when he biddeth them to walk in the spirit, he plainly denieth that works do justify. As if he would say: When I speak of the fulfilling of the law, I mean not that ye are justified by the law, but this I mean, that there be two contrary captains in you, the

spirit and the flesh. God hath stirred up in your bodies a strife and a battle; for the spirit wrestleth against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit (Gal. v. 17.). Here I require nothing else of you, but that ye follow the spirit as your captain and guide, and that ye resist that captain the flesh; for that is all that ye be able to do. Obey the spirit, and fight against the flesh. Therefore, when I teach you to observe the law, and exhort you to love one another, think not that I go about to revoke that which I have taught concerning the doctrine of faith, and that I now attribute justification to the law or to charity: but my meaning is, that ye should walk in the spirit, and that ye should not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

Paul useth very fit words and to the purpose. As if he would say: We come not yet to the fulfilling of the law; therefore we must walk in the spirit, and be exercised therein, that we may think, say, and do those things which are of the spirit, and resist those things which are of the flesh: therefore he addeth:

Verse 16. *And ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.*

As if he would say: The desires or lusts of the flesh be not yet dead in us, but spring up again and fight against the spirit. The flesh of no faithful man is so good, which being offended would not bite and devour, or at the least omit somewhat of that commandment of love. Yea, even at the first brunt he cannot refrain himself, but is angry with his neighbour, desireth to be revenged, and hateth him as an enemy, or at the least loveth him not so much as he should do, and as this commandment requireth. And this happeneth even to the faithful.

Therefore the apostle hath given this rule for the faithful, that they should serve one another through love, that they should bear the burdens and infirmities one of another, and that they should forgive one another. And without this bearing and forbearing through love, it is impossible that peace and concord should continue amongst Christians. For it cannot be but that thou must needs often offend, and be offended. Thou seest many things in me which offend thee, and I again see many things in thee which mislike me. Here if one bear not

with another through love, there shall be no end of dissension, discord, envy, hatred, and malice.

Wherefore Paul would have us to walk in the spirit, lest we fulfil the lusts of the flesh. As if he should say : Although ye be moved with wrath and displeasure against your brother, offending you or doing any thing heinously against you, yet notwithstanding resist and express these violent motions through the spirit, bear with his weakness, and love him according to that commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. For thy brother doth not therefore cease to be thy neighbour, because he slippeth, or offendeth thee; but then hath he most need that thou shouldest exercise and shew thy charity towards him. And this commandment, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, requireth the self-same thing, to wit, that thou shouldest not obey the flesh, which, when it is offended, hateth, biteth, and devoureth. But wrestle against it in spirit, and continue through the same in the love of thy neighbour, although thou find nothing in him worthy of love.

The schoolmen take the concupiscence of the flesh for carnal lust. Indeed it is true, that even the godly; especially the younger sort, are tempted with fleshly lust. Yea, they also that be married (so corrupt and pestilent is flesh) are not without such carnal lust. Here let every one (I speak now to the godly being married, both man and wife) diligently examine himself, and no doubt many shall find this in themselves, that the beauty and conditions of another man's wife pleaseth him better than of his own, and so contrariwise, his own lawful wife he loatheth or misliketh, and loveth her which is unlawful. And this commonly is wont to happen, not in marriage only, but in all other matters. Men set light by that which they have, and are in love with that which they have not: as the poet saith:

" Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata :"

That is,

Of things most forbidden we always are fain;
And things most denied we seek to obtain.

I do not deny therefore, but that the concupiscence of the flesh comprehendeth carnal lust, but not that only.

For concupiscence comprehendeth all other corrupt affections, wherewith the very faithful are infected, some more, some less; as pride, hatred, covetousness, impatency, and such like. Yea Paul rehearseth afterwards among the works of the flesh, not only these gross vices, but also idolatry, heresies and such other. It is plain, therefore, that he speaketh of the whole concupiscence of the flesh, and of the whole dominion of sin, which stirreth even in the godly, who have received the first fruits of the spirit, against the dominion of the spirit. He speaketh therefore, not only of carnal lust, pride, covetousness, &c. but also of incredulity, distrust, despair, hatred, and contempt of God, idolatry, heresies, and such other, when he saith, And ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. As if he should say: I write unto you that you should love one another. This ye do not, neither can ye do it, because of the flesh, which is infected and corrupted with concupiscence, and doth not only stir up sin in you, but also is sin itself. For if ye had perfect charity, no heaviness, no adversity could be so great, which should be able to hurt or hinder that charity; for it would be spread throughout the whole body. There should be no wife, were she never so hard-favoured, whom her husband would not love entirely, loathing all other women, though they were never so fair and beautiful. But this is not done, therefore it is impossible for us to be made righteous through love.

Wherefore think me not to revoke and unsay that which I have taught concerning faith: for faith and hope must continue, that by the one we may be justified, and by the other we may be raised up in adversities, and endure unto the end. Moreover, we serve one another through charity, because faith is not idle; but charity is weak and little. Therefore, when I bid you walk in the spirit, I do sufficiently declare that ye are not justified through charity.

And when I exhort to walk in the spirit, that ye fulfil not the concupiscence of the flesh, I do not require of you that ye should utterly put off the flesh; or kill it, but that ye should bridle and subdue it. For God will have mankind to endure even to the last day. And this cannot be done without parents, which do beget and bring up children. These means continuing, it must needs be that flesh also must continue, and consequently

sin, for flesh is not without sin. Therefore in respect of the flesh we are sinners, but in respect of the spirit we are righteous; and so we are partly sinners and partly righteous. Notwithstanding our righteousness is much more plentiful than our sin, because the holiness and righteousness of Christ our mediator, doth far exceed the sin of the whole world; and the forgiveness of sins which we have through him is so great, so large, and so infinite, that it easily swalloweth up all sins, so that we walk according to the spirit, &c.

The Papists dreamed that this commandment belongeth only to their clergymen, and that the apostle exhorteth them to live chastely, by subduing the flesh with watching, fasting, labour, &c.; and then they should not fulfil the concupiscence of the flesh, that is to say, carnal lust. As though the whole concupiscence of the flesh were overcome when this fleshly lust is subdued; which notwithstanding they were never able to suppress and keep under with any yoke that they could lay upon the flesh. Which thing Hierom (I say nothing of others), who was a marvellous lover and defender of chastity, doth plainly confess. "O (saith he) how often have I thought myself to be in the midst of the vain delights and pleasures of Rome, even when I was in the wild wilderness, which being burnt up with the heat of the sun, yieldeth an ugly habitation to the monks, &c." Again, "I, who for fear of hell had condemned myself to such a prison, thought myself oftentimes to be dancing among young women, when I had no other company but scorpions and wild beasts. My face was pale with fasting, but my mind was enflamed with desires in my cold body, and although my flesh was half dead already, yet the flames of fleshly lust boiled within me," &c.

If Hierom felt in himself such flames of fleshly lust, who lived in the barren wilderness with bread and water, what do our holy belly-gods the clergymen feel, think ye, who so stuff and stretch out themselves with all kinds of dainty fare, that it is marvel their bellies burst not? Wherefore these things are written, not to hermits and monks (as the Papists dream) nor to sinners in the world only, but to the universal church of Christ, and to all the faithful; whom Paul exhorteth to walk in the spirit, that they fulfil not the lusts of the flesh; that is to say, not

only to bridle the gross motions of the flesh, as carnal lust, wrath, impatency, and such like; but also the spiritual motions, as doubting, blasphemy, idolatry, contempt and hatred of God, &c.

Paul (as I have said) doth not require of the godly, that they should utterly put off or destroy the flesh; but that they should so bridle it, that it might be subject to the spirit. In the tenth to the Romans he biddeth us cherish the flesh. For as we may not be cruel to other men's bodies, nor vex them with unreasonable labour, even so we may not be cruel to our own bodies (Eph. v. 29.). Wherefore, according to Paul's precept, we must cherish our flesh, that it may be able to endure the labours both of the mind and of the body; but yet only for necessity's sake, and not to nourish the lusts thereof. Therefore, if the flesh begin to wax wanton, repress it and bridle it by the spirit. If it will not be, marry a wife, for it is better to marry than to burn. Thus doing thou walkest in the spirit; that is, thou followest God's word, and doest his will.

Verse 17. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

When Paul saith that the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, he admonisheth us, that we must feel the concupiscence of the flesh, that is to say, not only carnal lust, but also pride, wrath, heaviness, impatience, incredulity, and such like. Notwithstanding he would have us to feel them, that we consent not unto them, nor accomplish them; that is, that we neither think, speak, nor do those things which the flesh provoketh us unto. As, if it move us to anger, yet we should be angry in such wise (as we are taught in the fourth psalm) that we sin not. As if Paul would thus say: I know that the flesh will provoke you unto wrath, envy, doubting, incredulity, and such like; but resist it by the spirit, that ye sin not. But if ye forsake the guiding of the spirit, and follow the flesh, ye shall fulfil the lusts of the flesh, and ye shall die, as Paul saith in the eighth to the Romans. So this saying of the apostle is to be understood, not of fleshly lust only, but of the whole kingdom of sin.

Verse 17. *And these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot do the same things that ye would.*

These two captains or leaders (saith he), the flesh and the spirit, are one against another in your body, so that ye cannot do what ye would. And this place witnesseth plainly, that Paul writeth these things to the faithful, that is, to the church believing in Christ, baptized, justified, renewed, and having full forgiveness of sins. Yet notwithstanding he saith that she hath flesh rebelling against the spirit. After the same manner he speaketh of himself in the seventh to the Romans. I (saith he) am carnal and sold under sin. And again; I see another law in my members rebelling against the law of my mind, and leading me captive under the law of sin, which is in my members. Also: O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? &c.

Here, not only the schoolmen, but also some of the old fathers, are much troubled, seeking how they may excuse Paul. For it seemeth unto them absurd and unseemly to say, that that elect vessel of Christ should have sin. But we credit Paul's own words, wherein he plainly confesseth that he is sold under sin, that he is led captive of sin, that he hath a law in his members rebelling against him, and that in their flesh he serveth the law of sin. Here again they answer, that the apostle speaketh in the person of the wicked. But the wicked do not complain of the rebellion of their flesh, of any battle or conflict, or of the captivity and bondage of sin; for sin mightily reigneth in them. This is therefore the very complaint of Paul and of all the faithful. Wherefore they have done very wickedly which have excused Paul and all the faithful to have no sin. For by this persuasion (which proceedeth of ignorance of the doctrine of faith) they have robbed the church of a singular consolation: they have abolished the forgiveness of sins, and made Christ of none effect.

Wherefore, when Paul saith, I see another law in my members, &c. he denieth not that he hath flesh, and the vices of the flesh in him. It is likely, therefore, that he felt sometimes the motions of carnal lust. But yet (no doubt) these motions were well suppressed in him by the

great and grievous afflictions and temptations both of mind and body, wherewith he was in a manner continually exercised and vexed, as his epistles do declare; or if he at any time, being merry and strong, felt the lust of the flesh, wrath, impatency, and such like, yet he resisted them by the spirit, and suffered not those motions to bear rule in him. Therefore let us in no wise suffer such comfortable places (whereby Paul describeth the battle of the flesh against the spirit in his own body) to be corrupted with such foolish glosses. The schoolmen, the monks, and such other, never felt any spiritual temptations, and therefore they fought only for the repressing and overcoming of fleshly lust and lechery, and being proud of that victory which they never yet obtained, they thought themselves far better and more holy than married men. I will not say, that under this holy pretence they nourished and maintained all kinds of horrible sins, as dissension, pride, hatred, disdain, and despising of their neighbours, trust in their own righteousness, presumption, contempt of all godliness and of the word of God, infidelity, blasphemy, and such like. Against these sins they never fought, nay rather they took them to be no sins at all: they put righteousness in the keeping of their foolish and wicked vows, and unrighteousness in the neglecting and contemning of the same.

But this must be our ground and anchor-hold, that Christ is our only and perfect righteousness. If we have nothing whereunto we may trust; yet these three things (as Paul saith), faith, hope, and love do remain. Therefore we must always believe and always hope; we must always take hold of Christ as the head and foundation of our righteousness. He that believeth in him shall not be ashamed (Rom. ix. 33.). Moreover, we must labour to be outwardly righteous also; that is to say, not to consent to the flesh, which always enticeth us to some evil; but to resist it by the spirit. We must not be overcome with impatency for the unthankfulness and contempt of the people, which abuseth the Christian liberty: but through the spirit we must overcome this and all other temptations. Look then how much we strive against the flesh by the spirit, so much are we outwardly righteous. Albeit this righteousness doth not commend us before God.

Let no man therefore despair, if he feel the flesh often-

times to stir up new battle against the spirit, or if he cannot by-and-by subdue the flesh, and make it obedient unto the spirit. I also do wish myself to have a more valiant and constant heart, which might be able, not only boldly to condemn the threatenings of tyrants, the heresies, offences, and tumults, which Satan and his soldiers, the enemies of the gospel, stir up; but also might by-and-by shake off the vexations and anguish of spirit, and briefly, might not fear the sharpness of death, but receive and embrace it as a most friendly guest. But I find another law in my members, rebelling against the law of my mind, &c. Some other do wrestle with inferior temptations, as poverty, reproach, impatency, and such like.

Let no man marvel, therefore, or be dismayed, when he feeleth in his body this battle of the flesh against the spirit, but let him pluck up his heart, and comfort himself with these words of Paul: The flesh lusteth against the spirit. Also: These are contrary one to another, so that ye do not those things that ye would. For by these sentences he comforteth them that be tempted. As if he should say: It is impossible for you to follow the guiding of the spirit in all things without any feeling or hindrance of the flesh. Nay, the flesh will resist; and so resist and hinder you that ye cannot do those things that gladly ye would. Here it shall be enough if ye resist the flesh, and fulfil not the lust thereof; that is to say, if ye follow the spirit and not the flesh, which easily is overthrown by impatency, coveteth to revenge, biteth, grudgeth, hateth God, is angry with him, despaireth, &c. Therefore, when a man feeleth this battle of the flesh, let him not be discouraged therewith, but let him resist in spirit, and say I am a sinner, and I feel sin in me; for I have not yet put off the flesh, in which sin dwelleth so long as it liveth. But I will obey the spirit, and not the flesh; that is, I will by faith and hope lay hold upon Christ, and by his word I will raise up myself, and being so raised up, I will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

It is very profitable for the godly to know this, and to bear it well in mind; for it wonderfully comforteth them when they are tempted. When I was a monk, I thought by-and-by that I was utterly cast away, if at any time I felt the lust of the flesh; that is to say, if I felt any evil motion, fleshly lust, wrath, hatred, or envy against any brother. I assayed many ways to help to quiet my con-

science, but it would not be; for the concupiscence and lust of my flesh did always return, so that I could not rest, but was continually vexed with these thoughts: This or that sin thou hast committed: thou art infected with envy, with impatiency, and such other sins; therefore thou art entered into this holy order in vain, and all thy good works are unprofitable. If then I had rightly understood these sentences of Paul, The flesh lusteth contrary to the spirit, and the spirit contrary to the flesh; and these two are one against another, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would do; I should not have so miserably tormented myself, but should have thought and said to myself, as now commonly I do: Martin, thou shalt not utterly be without sin, for thou hast flesh: thou shalt therefore feel the battle thereof, according to that saying of Paul, The flesh resisteth the spirit. Despair not therefore, but resist it strongly, and fulfil not the lust thereof. Thus doing, thou art not under the law.

I remember that Staupitius was wont to say, "I have vowed unto God above a thousand times, that I would become a better man; but I never performed that which I vowed. Hereafter I will make no such vow; for I have now learned by experience that I am not able to perform it. Unless, therefore, God be favourable and merciful unto me for Christ's sake, and grant unto me a blessed and a happy hour, when I shall depart out of this miserable life, I shall not be able, with all my vows and all my good deeds, to stand before him." This was not only a true, but also a godly and a holy desperation: and this must all they confess, both with mouth and heart, which will be saved. For the godly trust not to their own righteousness, but say with David, Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall none that liveth be justified (Psalm cxliii. 2.). Again: If thou, O Lord, shouldest straightly mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand (Psalm cxxx. 3.). They look unto Christ their reconciler, who gave his life for their sins. Moreover, they know that the remnant of sin, which is in their flesh, is not laid to their charge, but freely pardoned. Notwithstanding, in the mean while, they fight in spirit against the flesh, lest they should fulfil the lusts thereof. And although they feel the flesh to rage and rebel against the spirit, and themselves also do fall sometimes into sin through infirmity, yet are they not

discouraged, nor think therefore that their state and kind of life, and the works which are done according to their calling, displease God: but they raise up themselves by faith.

The faithful, therefore, receive great consolation by this doctrine of Paul, in that they know themselves to have part of the flesh and part of the spirit, but yet so notwithstanding that the spirit ruleth, and the flesh is subdued and kept under awe, that righteousness reigneth and sin serveth. He that knoweth not this doctrine, and thinketh that the faithful ought to be without all fault, and yet seeth the contrary in himself, must needs at the length be swallowed up by the spirit of heaviness, and fall into desperation. But whoso knoweth this doctrine well and useth it rightly, to him the things that are evil turn unto good (Rom. viii. 28.). For when the flesh provoketh him to sin, by occasion thereof he is stirred up and enforced to seek forgiveness of sins by Christ, and to embrace the righteousness of faith, which else he would not so greatly esteem, nor seek for the same with so great desire. Therefore it profiteth us very much to feel sometimes the wickedness of our nature and corruption of our flesh, that yet by these means we may be waked and stirred up to faith, and to call upon Christ. And by this occasion a Christian becometh a mighty workman and a wonderful creator, which of heaviness can make joy, of terror comfort, of sin righteousness, and of death life, when he by this means repressing and bridling the flesh, maketh it subject to the spirit.

Wherefore let not them which feel the lust of the flesh despair of their salvation. Let them feel it and all the force thereof, so that they consent not to it. Let the passions of lust, wrath, and such other vices shake them, so that they do not overthrow them. Let sin assail them, so that they do not accomplish it. Yea, the more godly a man is, the more doth he feel that battle. And hereof come those lamentable complaints of the faithful in the Psalms and in the holy scripture. Of this battle the hermits, the monks, and the schoolmen, and all that seek righteousness and salvation by works, know nothing at all.

But here may some man say, that it is a dangerous matter to teach that a man is not condemned, if by-and-by he overcome not the motions and passions of the flesh

which he feeleth. For when this doctrine is taught amongst the common people, it maketh them careless, negligent, and slothful. This is it which I said a little before, that if we teach faith, then carnal men neglect and reject works. If works be required, then is faith and consolation of conscience lost. Here no man can be compelled, neither can there be any certain rule prescribed. But let every man diligently try himself to what passion of the flesh he is most subject, and when he findeth that, let him not be careless, nor flatter himself; but let him watch and wrestle in spirit against it, that if he cannot altogether bridle it, yet at the least he do not fulfil the lust thereof.

This battle of the flesh against the spirit, all the children of God have had and felt: and the self same do we also feel and prove. He that searcheth his own conscience, if he be not an hypocrite, shall well perceive, that to be true in himself, which Paul here saith, that the flesh lusteth against the spirit. All the faithful therefore do feel and confess, that their flesh resisteth against the spirit, and that these two are so contrary the one to the other in themselves, that, do what they can, they are not able to perform that which they would do. Therefore the flesh hindereth us that we cannot keep the commandments of God, that we cannot love our neighbours as ourselves, much less can we love God with all our heart: therefore it is impossible for us to become righteous by the works of the law. Indeed there is a good will in us, and so must there be (for it is the spirit itself which resisteth the flesh) which would gladly do good, fulfil the law, love God and his neighbour, and such like, but the flesh obeyeth not this good will, but resisteth it; and yet God imputeth not unto us this sin: for he is merciful to those that believe for Christ's sake.

But it followeth not, therefore, that thou shouldest make a light matter of sin; because God doth not impute it. True it is that he doth not impute it: but to whom, and for what cause? To such as repent and lay hold by faith upon Christ the mercy-seat; for whose sake, as all their sins are forgiven them, even so the remnants of sin which are in them be not imputed unto them. They make not their sin less than it is, but amplify it and set it out as it is indeed; for they know that it cannot be put away by satisfactions, works, or righteousness, but only

by the death of Christ. And yet notwithstanding the greatness and enormity of their sin doth not cause them to despair, but they assure themselves that the same shall not be imputed unto them, or laid unto their charge.

This I say, lest any man should think that after faith is received, there is little account to be made of sin. Sin is truly sin, whether a man commit it before he hath received the knowledge of Christ, or after. And God always hateth sin; yea all sin is damnable as touching the fact itself. But in that it is not damnable to him that believeth, it cometh of Christ, who by his death hath taken away sin. But to him that believeth not in Christ, not only all his sins are damnable, but even his good works also are sin; according to that saying, Whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Rom. xiv. 23.). Therefore, the error of the schoolmen is most pernicious, which do distinguish sins according to the fact, and not according to the person. He that believeth hath as great sin as the unbeliever. But to him that believeth, it is forgiven and not imputed; to the unbeliever it is not pardoned, but imputed. To the believer it is venial; to the unbeliever it is mortal and damnable; not for any difference of sins, or because the sin of the believer is less, and the sin of the unbeliever greater; but for the difference of the persons. For the faithful assureth himself by faith that his sin is forgiven him, forasmuch as Christ hath given himself for it. Therefore, although he have sin in him, and daily sinneth, yet he continueth godly; but contrariwise the unbeliever continueth wicked. And this is the true wisdom and consolation of the godly, that, although they have and commit sins, yet they know that for Christ's sake they are not imputed unto them.

This I say for the comfort of the godly. For they only feel indeed that they have and do commit sins, that is to say, they feel that they do not love God so fervently as they should do: that they do not believe him so heartily as they would, but rather they oftentimes doubt whether God have a care of them or no: they are impatient and are angry with God in adversity. Hereof (as I have said) proceed the sorrowful complaints of the faithful in the scriptures, and especially in the Psalms. And Paul himself complaineth that he is sold under sin (Rom. vii. 14.) And here he saith that the flesh resisteth and rebelleth against the spirit. But because they mortify the

deeds of the flesh by the spirit (as he saith in another place, and also in the end of this chapter; they crucify the flesh with the desires and lusts thereof (Gal. v. 24.)); therefore these sins do not hurt them nor condemn them. But if they obey the flesh in fulfilling the lust thereof, then do they lose faith and the Holy Ghost. And if they do not abhor their sin and return unto Christ (who hath given power to his church, to receive and raise up those that be fallen, that so they may recover faith and the Holy Ghost), they die in their sins. Wherefore we speak not of them which dream that they have faith, and yet continue still in their sins. These men have their judgment already; they that live after the flesh shall die. Also: the works of the flesh are manifest, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, debate, emulations, wrath, contentions, seditions, heresies, envy, murder, drunkenness, gluttony, and such like, whereof I tell you before, as also I have told you, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Hereby we may see who be very saints indeed. They be not stocks and stones (as the monks and schoolmen dream), so that they are never moved with any thing, never feel any lusts or desires of the flesh; but, as Paul saith, their flesh lusteth against the spirit, and therefore they have sin, and both can and do sin. And the thirty-second psalm witnesseth, that the faithful do confess their unrighteousness, and pray that the wickedness of their sin may be forgiven, where it saith: I will confess against myself my wickedness unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the punishment of my sin. Therefore shall every one that is godly make his prayer unto thee, &c. Moreover, the whole church, which indeed is holy, prayeth that her sins may be forgiven her, and it believeth the forgiveness of sins. And in the cxliii. psalm, David prayeth, O Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall none that liveth be justified. And in psalm cxxx. If thou, O Lord, shouldest straitly mark iniquities, Lord who shall stand in thy presence? But with thee is mercy, &c. Thus do the chiefest saints and children of God speak and pray, as David, Paul, &c. All the faithful, therefore, do speak and pray the same thing, and with the same spirit. The popish sophisters read not the scriptures, or if they read them they have a veil before their eyes;

and therefore, as they cannot judge rightly of any thing, so can they not judge rightly either of sin or of holiness.

Verse 18. *If ye be led by the spirit, ye are not under the law.*

Paul cannot forget his doctrine of faith, but still repeateth it and beateth it into their heads; yea even when he treateth of good works. Here some man may object: How can it be that we should not be under the law? And yet thou, notwithstanding, O Paul, teachest us that we have flesh which lusteth against the spirit, and fighteth against us, tormenteth and bringeth us into bondage. And indeed we feel sin, and cannot be delivered from the feeling thereof, though we would never so fain. And what is this else but to be under the law? But saith he, Let this nothing trouble you; only do your endeavour that ye may be led by the spirit, that is to say, shew yourselves willing to follow and obey that will which resisteth the flesh, and doth not accomplish the lusts thereof (for this is, to be led and to be drawn by the spirit); then are ye not under the law. So Paul speaketh of himself (Rom. vii.): In my mind I serve the law of God; that is to say, In spirit I am not subject to any sin, but yet in my flesh I serve the law of sin. The faithful then are not under the law, that is to say, in spirit; for the law cannot accuse them, nor pronounce sentence of death against them, although they feel sin, and confess themselves to be sinners; for the power and strength of the law is taken from it by Christ, who was made under the law, that he might redeem them which were under the law (Gal. iv. 4.). Therefore the law cannot accuse that for sin in the faithful, which is sin indeed, and committed against the law.

So great then is the power and dominion of the spirit, that the law cannot accuse the godly, though they commit that which is sin indeed. For Christ is our righteousness, whom we apprehend by faith; he is without all sin, and therefore the law cannot accuse him. As long as we cleave fast unto him, we are led by the spirit, and are free from the law. And so the apostle, even when he teacheth good works, forgetteth not his doctrine concerning justification; but always sheweth that it is impossible for us to be justified by works. For the remnants of sin cleave fast in our flesh, and therefore so long as our flesh

liveth, it ceaseth not to lust contrary to the spirit. Notwithstanding there cometh no danger unto us thereby, because we be free from the law, so that we walk in the spirit.

And with these words, If ye be led by the spirit, ye be not under the law, thou mayest greatly comfort thyself and others that be grievously tempted. For it oftentimes cometh to pass, that a man is so vehemently assailed with wrath, hatred, impatency, carnal desire, terror, and anguish of spirit, or some other lust of the flesh, that he cannot shake them off, though he would never so fain. What should he do in this case? Should he despair? No: God forbid: but let him say thus with himself; Thy flesh fighteth and rageth against the spirit: let it rage as long as it listeth: only see thou that in any case thou consent not to it, to fulfil the lusts thereof, but walk wisely, and follow the leading of the spirit. In so doing thou art free from the law. It accuseth and terrifieth thee (I grant), but altogether in vain. In this conflict, therefore, of the flesh against the spirit, there is nothing better than to have the word of God before thine eyes, and therein to seek the comfort of the spirit.

And let not him that suffereth this temptation be dismayed, in that the devil can so aggravate sin, that during the conflict he thinketh himself to be utterly overthrown, and feeling nothing else but the wrath of God and desperation. Here in any wise let him not follow his own feeling and the judgment of reason, but let him take sure hold of this saying of Paul, If ye be led by the spirit, that is to wit, if ye raise up and comfort yourselves through faith in Christ, ye be not under the law. So shall he have a strong buckler, wherewith he may beat back all the fiery darts which the wicked fiend assaileth him withal. How much soever then the flesh doth boil and rage, yet cannot her motions and rages hurt and condemn him, for as much as he, following the guiding of the spirit, doth not consent unto the flesh, nor fulfil the lusts thereof. Therefore, when the motions of the flesh do rage, the only remedy is to take to us the sword of the spirit, that is to say, the word of salvation (which is, that God would not the death of a sinner, but that he convert and live), and to fight against them: which if we do, let us not doubt but we shall obtain the victory, although so long as the battle endureth, we feel the pain contrary.

But set the word out of sight, and there is no counsel nor help remaining. Of this that I say, I myself have good experience, I have suffered many great passions, and the same also very vehement and great. But so soon as I have laid hold of any place of scripture, and stayed myself upon it as upon my chief anchor-hold, straightways my temptations did vanish away: which, without the word, it had been impossible for me to endure any little space, and much less to overcome them.

The sum or effect, therefore, of all that which Paul hath taught in this disputation or discourse concerning the conflict or battle between the flesh and the spirit, is this: that the saints and the elect of God cannot perform that which the spirit desireth. For the spirit would gladly be altogether pure, but the flesh being joined unto the spirit, will not suffer that. Notwithstanding they be saved by the remission of sins, which is in Christ Jesus. Moreover, because they walk in the spirit, and are led by the spirit, they be not under the law, that is to say, the law cannot accuse or terrify them; yea, although it go about never so much so to do, yet shall it never be able to drive them to desperation.

Verse 19. Moreover the works of the flesh be manifest, which are, &c.

This place is not unlike to this sentence of Christ: By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of brambles? So every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and an evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit, &c. (Matt. vii. 16.) Paul teacheth the very same thing which Christ taught, that is to wit, that works and fruits do sufficiently testify whether the trees be good or evil; whether men follow the guiding of the flesh or of the spirit. As if he should say: Lest some of you might say for himself, that he understandeth me not, now when I treat of the battle between the flesh and the spirit, I will set before your eyes, first the works of the flesh, whereof many are known, even to the ungodly; and then also the works of the spirit.

And this doth Paul, because there were many hypocrites amongst the Galatians (as there are also at this day among us), which outwardly pretended to be godly men, and boasted much of the spirit, and as touching the words

they understood the true doctrine of the gospel: but they walked not according to the spirit, but according to the flesh, and performed the works thereof. Whereby Paul manifestly convinceth them to be no such holy men indeed as they boasted themselves to be. And lest they should despise this his admonition, he pronounceth against them this dreadful sentence, that they should not be inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, to the end that being thus admonished, they might amend. Every age, even in the faithful hath his peculiar temptations: as fleshly lusts assail a man most of all in his youth, in his middle age ambition and vain-glory, and in his old age covetousness. There was never yet any of the faithful whom the flesh hath not often in his life-time provoked to impatience, anger, vain-glory, &c. Paul therefore speaking here of the faithful, saith that the flesh lusteth in them against the spirit, &c. therefore they shall never be without the desires and battles of the flesh: notwithstanding they do not hurt them. But of this matter we must thus judge, that it is one thing to be provoked of the flesh, and yet not willingly to yield to the lusts and desires thereof, but to walk after the leading of the spirit, and to resist the flesh: and another thing to assent unto the flesh, and without all fear or remorse to perform and fulfil the works thereof, and to continue therein, and yet notwithstanding to counterfeit holiness, and to brag of the spirit. The first he comforteth, when he saith, that they be led by the spirit, and be not under the law. The other he threatneth with everlasting destruction.

Notwithstanding sometimes it happeneth that the saints also do fall and perform the lusts of the flesh: as David fell horribly into adultery. Also he was the cause of the slaughter of many men, when he caused Urias to be slain in the forefront of the battle: and thereby also he gave occasion to the enemies to glory and triumph over the people of God, to worship their idols, and to blaspheme the God of Israel. Peter also fell most grievously and horribly when he denied Christ. But although these sins were great and heinous, yet were they not committed upon any contempt of God or of a wilful and obstinate mind, but through infirmity and weakness. Again, when they were admonished, they did not obstinately continue in their sins, but repented. Such he willeth afterwards in the sixth chapter to be received, instructed, and restored,

saying, If a man be fallen by occasion into any sin, ye which are spiritual restore such a one with the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted. To those therefore which sin and fall through infirmity, pardon is not denied, so that they rise again and continue not in their sin : for of all things continuance in sin is the worst. But if they repent not, but still obstinately continue in their wickedness and perform the desires of the flesh, it is a certain token that there is deceit in their spirit.

No man therefore shall be without lusts and desires so long as he liveth in the flesh, and therefore no man shall be free from temptations. Notwithstanding some are tempted one way and some another, according to the difference of persons. One man is assailed with more vehement and grievous motions, as with bitterness and anguish of spirit, blasphemy, distrust, and desperation ; another with more gross temptations, as with fleshly lusts, wrath, envy, covetousness, and such-like. But in this case Paul requireth us that we walk in the spirit, and resist the flesh. But whoso obeyeth the flesh, and continueth without the fear of God or remorse of conscience in accomplishing the desires and lusts thereof : let him know that he pertaineth not unto Christ : and although he brag of the name of a Christian never so much, yet doth he but deceive himself. For they which are of Christ, do crucify their flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.

Who be rightly called Saints, and be so indeed?

This place (as I have also forewarned you by the way) containeth in it a singular consolation : for it teacheth us that the saints and most holy men in this world live not without concupiscence and temptations of the flesh, nor yet without sins. It warneth us therefore to take heed that we do not as some did, of whom Gerson writeth, which laboured to attain to such perfection, that they might be without all feeling of temptations or sins : that is to say, very stocks and stones.

The like imagination the monks and schoolmen had of their saints, as though they had been very senseless blocks, and without all affections. The Virgin Mary felt great grief and sorrow of spirit when she missed her son, (Luke ii.) David in the Psalms complaineth that he is almost swallowed up with the excessive sorrow for the greatness of

his temptations and sins. Paul also complaineth that he hath battles without, and terrors within : (2 Cor. vii. 5.) and that in his flesh he serveth the law of sin. He saith, that he is careful for all the Churches : (2 Cor. xi. 28.) and that God shewed great mercy towards him, in that he delivered Epaphroditus being at the point of death, to life again, lest he should have had sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore the saints of the papists are like to the Stoicks, who imagined such wise men, as in the world were never yet to be found. And by this foolish and devilish persuasion which proceeded from the ignorance of this doctrine of Paul, the schoolmen brought both themselves and others without number into horrible desperation.

When I was a monk I did oftentimes most heartily wish, that I might once be so happy, as to see the conversation and life of some saint or holy man. But in the mean time I imagined such a saint as lived in the wilderness abstaining from meat and drink, and living only with roots of herbs and cold water: and this opinion of those monstrous saints, I had learned not only out of the books of the sophisters and schoolmen, but also out of the books of the fathers. For thus writeth Hierome in a certain place : " As touching meats and drinks I say nothing, forasmuch as it is excess, that even such as are weak and feeble should use cold water, or eat any sodden thing," &c. But now in the light of the gospel we plainly see who they are whom Christ and his apostles call Saints : Not they which live a sole and a single life, or straitly observe days, meats, apparel, and such other things, or in outward appearance do other great and monstrous works, (as we read of many in the lives of the fathers :) but they which being called by the sound of the gospel and baptised, do believe that they be justified and cleansed by the death of Christ. So Paul every where, writing to the christians, calleth them holy, the children and heirs of God, &c. Whosoever then do believe in Christ, whether they be men or women, bond or free, are all saints : not by their own works, but by the works of God, which they receive by faith : as his word, his sacraments, the passion of Christ, his death, resurrection, victory, and the sending of the Holy Ghost. To conclude, they are saints through such a holiness, as they freely receive, not through such a holiness as they themselves have gotten by their own industry, good works, and merits.

So the ministers of the word, the magistrates of common-weals, parents, children, masters, servants, &c. are true saints, if first and before all things they assure themselves that Christ is their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: secondly, if every one would do his duty in his vocation according to the rule of God's word, and obey not the flesh, but repress the lust and desire thereof by the spirit. Now, whereas all be not of like strength to resist temptations, but many infirmities and offences are seen in the most part of men: this nothing hindreth their holiness, so that their sins proceed not of an obstinate wilfulness, but only of frailty and infirmity. For (as I have said before) the godly do feel the desires and lusts of the flesh, but they resist them, to the end that they accomplish them not. Also if they at any time unadvisedly fall into sin, yet notwithstanding they obtain forgiveness thereof, if by faith in Christ they be raised up again: who would not that we should drive away, but seek out and bring home the straying and lost sheep, &c. Therefore God forbid that I should straightway judge those which are weak in faith and manners, to be profane or unholy, if I see that they love and reverence the word of God, to come to the supper of the Lord, &c. For these God hath received and counteth them righteous through the remission of sins: to him they stand or fall, &c.

Wherefore with great rejoicing I give thanks to God, for that he hath abundantly and above measure granted that unto me, which I so earnestly desired of him when I was a monk: for he hath given unto me the grace to see not one but many saints, yea an infinite number of true saints: not such as the sophisters have devised, but such as Christ himself and his apostles do describe. Of the which number I assure myself to be one. For I am baptized, and I do believe that Christ is my Lord, by his death hath redeemed and delivered me from all my sins, and hath given to me eternal righteousness and holiness. And let him be holden accursed, whosoever shall not give this honour unto Christ, to believe that by his death, his word, &c. he is justified and sanctified.

Wherefore rejecting this foolish and wicked opinion concerning the name of saints (which in the time of popery and ignorance we thought to pertain only to the saints which are in heaven, and in earth to the hermits and

monks which did certain great and strange works;) let us now learn by the holy scriptures, that all they which faithfully believe in Christ are saints. The world hath in great admiration the holiness of Benedict, Gregory, Bernard, Francis, and such like, because it heareth that they have done in outward appearance and in the judgment of the world, certain great and excellent works. Doubtless, Hillary, Cyrill, Athanasius, Ambrose, Augustine, and others, were saints also, which lived not so straight and severe a life as they did, but were conversant amongst men, and did eat common meats, drank wine, and used cleanly and comely apparel, so that in a manner there was no difference between them and other honest men as touching the common custom, and the use of things necessary for this life, and yet were they to be preferred far above the other. These men taught the doctrine and faith of Christ sincerely and purely, without any superstition; they resisted Heretics, they purged the Church from innumerable errors: their company and familiarity was comfortable to many, and specially to those which were afflicted and heavy hearted, whom they raised up and comforted by the word of God. For they did not withdraw themselves from the company of men, but they executed their offices even where most resort of people was. Contrariwise, the other not only taught many things contrary to the faith, but also were themselves the authors and first inventors of many superstitions, errors, abominable ceremonies, and wicked worshippings. Therefore, except at the hour of death, they laid hold of Christ, and reposed their whole trust in his death and victory, their straight and painful life availed them nothing at all.

These things sufficiently declare who be the true saints indeed, and which is to be called a holy life: not the life of those which lurk in caves and dens, which make their bodies lean with fasting, which wear hair, and do other like things with this persuasion and trust, that they shall have some singular reward in heaven above all other christians: but of those which be baptized and believe in Christ, which put off the old man with his works, but not at once: for concupiscence and lust remaineth in them so long as they live: the feeling whereof doth hurt them nothing at all, if they suffer it not to reign in them, but subdue it to the spirit.

This doctrine bringeth great consolation to godly minds,

that when they feel these darts of the flesh, wherewith Satan assaileth the spirit, they should not despair: and it happeneth to many in the papacy, which thought that they ought to feel no concupiscence of the flesh: whereas notwithstanding Hierom, Gregory, Benedict, Bernard, and others (whom the monks set before them as a perfect example of chastity and of all christian virtues) could never come so far as to feel no concupiscence or lust of the flesh. Yea, they felt it, and that very strongly. Which thing they acknowledge and plainly confess in divers places of their books.

Therefore we rightly confess in the articles of our belief, that we believe there is a holy church. For it is invisible, dwelling in spirit in a place that none can attain unto, and therefore her holiness cannot be seen: for God doth so hide her and cover her with infirmities, with sins, with errors, with divers forms of the cross and offences, that according to the judgment of reason it is no where to be seen. They that are ignorant of this, when they see the infirmities and sins of those which are baptized, which have the word and believe it: are by-and-by offended, and judge them not to pertain to the church. And in the mean while they dream that the hermits and monks, and such other shavelings are the church; which honour God with their lips, and worship him in vain, because they follow not the word of God, but the doctrines and commandments of men, and teach others to do the same. And because they do certain superstitions and monstrous works, which carnal reason magnifieth and highly esteemeth: therefore they judge them only to be saints and to be the church: and in so doing they change and turn this article of the faith clean contrary; "I believe that there is a holy church, &c." and in the stead of this word [I believe] they put in [I see]. These kinds of righteousness and holiness of man's own devising, are nothing else but spiritual sorceries wherewith the eyes and minds of men are blinded and led from the knowledge of true holiness.

But thus teach we, that the church hath no spot or wrinkle, but is holy, and yet through faith only in Christ Jesus: again, that she is holy in life and conversation by abstaining from the lusts of the flesh, and exercise of spiritual works: but yet not in such sort that she is delivered from all evil desires, or purged from all wicked opinions and errors. For the church always confesseth her

sins, and prayeth that her faults may be pardoned : also she believeth the forgiveness of sins. The saints therefore do sin, fall, and also err : but yet through ignorance. For they would not willingly deny Christ, forsake the gospel, &c. therefore they have remission of sins. And if through ignorance they err also in doctrine, yet is this pardoned : for in the end they acknowledge their error, and rest only upon the truth, and the grace of God offered in Christ, as Hierom, Gregory, Bernard, and others, did. Let Christians then endeavour to avoid the works of the flesh : but the desires or lusts of the flesh they cannot avoid.

It is very profitable therefore for them to feel the unclean lusts of the flesh, lest they should be puffed up with some vain and wicked opinion of the righteousness of their own works, as though they were accepted before God for the same. The monks, being puffed up with this opinion of their own righteousness, thought themselves to be so holy, that they sold their righteousness and holiness to others, although they were convinced by the testimony of their own hearts, that they were unclean. So pernicious and pestilent a poison it is for a man to trust in his own righteousness, and to think himself to be clean. But the godly, because they feel the uncleanness of their own hearts, therefore they cannot trust to their own righteousness. This feeling so maketh them to stoop, and so humbleth them, that they cannot trust to their own good works, but are constrained to fly unto Christ their mercy-seat and only succour ; who hath not a corrupt and sinful, but a most pure and holy flesh, which he hath given for the life of the world. (John vi. 51.) In him they find a sound and perfect righteousness. Thus they continue in humility : not counterfeit and monkish, but true and unfeigned, because of the uncleanness which yet remaineth in their flesh : for the which if God would straitly judge them, they should be found guilty of eternal death. But because they lift not up themselves proudly against God, but with a broken and a contrite heart humbly acknowledging their sins, and resting wholly upon the benefit of the mediator Christ, they come forth into the presence of God, and pray that for his sake their sins may be forgiven them : God spreadeth over them an infinite heaven of grace, and doth not impute unto them their sins for Christ's sake.

This I say, to the end that we may take heed of the pernicious errors of the papists touching the holiness of life, wherein our minds are so wrapped, that without great difficulty we could not wind ourselves out of them. Wherefore, do you endeavour with diligence, that ye may discern and rightly judge between true righteousness and holiness, and that which is hypocritical: then shall ye behold the kingdom of Christ with other eyes than carnal reason doth, that is, with spiritual eyes, and certainly judge those to be true saints indeed which are baptized and believe in Christ, and afterwards in the same faith whereby they are justified, and their sins, both past and present, are forgiven, do abstain from the desires of the flesh. But from these desires they are not thoroughly cleansed: for the flesh lusteth against the spirit. Notwithstanding these unclean and rebellious lusts do still remain in them to this end, that they may be humbled, and being so humbled, they may feel the sweetness of the grace and benefit of Christ. So these remnants of unclean lusts and sins do nothing at all hinder, but greatly further the godly: for the more they feel their infirmities and sins, so much the more they fly unto Christ the throne of grace, and more heartily crave his aid and succour: to wit, that he will cover them with his righteousness, that he will increase their faith, that he will endue them with his holy spirit, by whose gracious leading and guiding they may overcome the lusts of the flesh, that they rule and reign not over them, but may be subject unto them. Thus true Christians do continually wrestle with sin, and yet notwithstanding in wrestling they are not overcome, but obtain the victory.

This have I said, that ye may understand, not by men's dreams, but by the word of God, who be true saints indeed. We see then how greatly Christian doctrine helpeth to the raising up and comforting of weak consciences: which treateth not of couls, shavings, shearings, fraternities, and such like toys, but of high and weighty matters, as how we may overcome the flesh, sin, death, and the devil. This doctrine, as it is unknown to all justiciaries, and such as trust to their own works, so is it impossible for them to instruct, or bring into the right way, one poor conscience, wandring and going astray: or to pacify and comfort the same when it is in heaviness, terror, or desperation.

Verse 19. *The works of the flesh are manifest, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, witchcraft, &c.*

Paul doth not recite all the works of the flesh, but useth a certain number for a number uncertain. First, he reckoneth up the kinds of lusts, as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, wantonness, &c. Now not only carnal lust is a work of the flesh, as the papists dreamed, who called marriage also a work of the flesh (so chaste and holy are these men) whereof God himself is the author, which also they themselves reckoned among their sacraments: but he numbeth also amongst the works of the flesh (as I have said before) idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, and such other, which hereafter follow. Wherefore, this place alone doth sufficiently shew what Paul meaneth by the flesh. These words are so well known that they need no interpretation.

Idolatry.

All the highest religions, the holiness, and most fervent devotions of those which do reject Christ the mediator, and worship God without his word and commandment, are nothing else but plain idolatry. As in popery it was counted a most holy and spiritual act, when the monks being shut up in their cells did muse and meditate of God or of his works, and when they being inflamed with most earnest devotions, kneeled down, prayed, and were so ravished with the contemplations of heavenly things, that they wept for joy. There was no thinking of women, or any other creature, but only of God the creator, and of his wonderful works, and yet this most spiritual work (as reason esteemeth it) is, according to Paul, a work of the flesh and plain idolatry. Wherefore all such religion whereby God is worshipped without his word and commandment, is idolatry. And the more holy and spiritual it seemeth to be in outward shew, so much the more dangerous and pernicious it is. For it turneth men away from faith in Christ, and causeth them to trust to their own strength, works, and righteousness. And such is the religion of the anabaptists at this day: albeit they daily more and more bewray themselves to be possessed with the devil, and to be seditious and bloody men.

Therefore the fasting, the wearing of hair, holy works, straight rule, and whole life of the carthusians or charter-house monks, whose order, notwithstanding is of all other the straightest and sharpest, be very works of the flesh, yea plain idolatry. For they imagine themselves to be saints, and to be saved, not by Christ (whom they fear as a severe and cruel judge) but by observing of their rules and orders. Indeed they think of God, of Christ, and of heavenly things, but after their own reason, and not after the word of God: to wit, that their apparel, their manner of living, and their whole conversation is holy and pleaseth Christ: whom not only they hope to pacify by this straightness of life, but also to be rewarded of him for their good deeds and righteousness. Therefore their most spiritual thoughts (as they dream of them) are not only most fleshly, but also most wicked: for they would wipe away their sins, and obtain grace and everlasting life by the trust and affiance they have in their own righteousness, rejecting and despising the word, faith, and Christ. All the worshippings and services of God therefore, and all religions without Christ are idolatry and idol-service. In Christ alone the father is well pleased: whoso heareth him and doth that which he hath commanded, the same is beloved because of the beloved. He commandeth us to believe his word, and to be baptized, &c. and not to devise any new worshipping or service of God.

I have said before that the works of the flesh be manifest: as adultery, fornication, and such like be manifestly known to all men. But idolatry hath such a goodly shew, and is so spiritual, that it is known but to very few, that is, to the faithful, to be a work of the flesh. For the monk when he liveth chastly, fasteth, prayeth, or saith mass, is so far from thinking himself to be an idolater, or that he fulfilleth any work of the flesh, that he is assuredly persuaded that he is led and governed by the spirit, that he walketh according to the spirit, that he thinketh, speaketh, and doth nothing else but mere spiritual things, and that he doth such service unto God as is most acceptable unto him. No man can at this day persuade the papists that their mass is a great blasphemy against God, and idolatry, yea, and that so horrible as never was any in the church since the apostles' time. For they are blind and obstinate, and therefore they judge so perversely of God and of God's matters, thinking idolatry to be a true service of God, and

contrariwise faith to be idolatry. But we, which believe in Christ and know his mind, are able to judge and to discern all things, and cannot truly and before God be judged of any man.

Hereby it is plain that Paul calleth flesh whatsoever is in man, comprehending all the three powers of the soul, that is, the will that lusteth, the will that is inclined to anger, and the understanding. The works of the will that lusteth, are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and such like. The works of the will inclineth to wrath, are quarrellings, contentions, murder, and such other. The works of understanding or reason, are errors, false religions, superstitions, idolatry, heresies, that is to say, sects, and such like. It is very necessary for us to know these things: for this word [flesh] is so darkened in the whole kingdom of the pope, that they have taken the work of the flesh to be nothing else but the accomplishing of fleshly lust or the act of lechery: wherefore it was not possible for them to understand Paul. But here we may plainly see that Paul reckoneth idolatry and heresy amongst the works of the flesh, which two (as before we have said) reason esteemeth to be most high and excellent virtues, wisdom, religion, holiness, and righteousness. Paul (Col. ii.) calleth it the religion of angels. But, although it seem to be never so holy and spiritual, yet it is nothing else but a work of the flesh, an abomination and idolatry against the gospel, against faith, and against the true service of God. This do the faithful see, for they have spiritual eyes: but the justiciaries judge the contrary. For a monk cannot be persuaded that his vows be works of the flesh. So the Turk believeth nothing less than that his Alcoran, his washings, and other ceremonies which he observeth, be works of the flesh.

Witchcraft.

Of witchcraft I have spoken before in the third chapter. This vice was very common in these our days before the light and truth of the gospel was revealed. When I was a child, there were many witches and sorceries which bewitched both cattle and men, but specially children, and did great harm also otherwise. But now in the light of the gospel these things be not so commonly heard of, for the gospel thrusteth the devil out of his seat with all his

allusions. But now he bewitcheth men much more horribly, namely, with spiritual sorcery and witchcraft.

Paul reckoneth witchcraft among the works of the flesh, which notwithstanding, as all men know, is not a work of fleshly lust or lechery, but a kind of idolatry. For witchcraft covenanteth with the devil: superstition or idolatry covenanteth with God: albeit not with the true God, but with a counterfeit God. Wherefore idolatry is indeed a spiritual witchcraft. For as witches do enchant cattle and men: so idolaters, that is to say, all justiciaries or justifiers of themselves, go about to bewitch God, and to make him such a one as they do imagine. Now they imagine him to be such a one as will justify them, not of his mere grace and mercy, and through faith in Christ, but in respect of their will-worshippings and works of their own chusing, and in recompence thereof will give them righteousness and life everlasting. But whilst they go about to bewitch God, they bewitch themselves. For, if they continue in this wicked opinion which they conceive of God, they shall die in their idolatry and be damned. The works of the flesh are well known for the most part, therefore they shall not need any further declaration.

Sects.

By the name of sects Paul meaneth here, not those divisions or contentions which rise sometimes in the government of households or of common-weals for worldly and earthly matters: but those which rise in the church about doctrine, faith, and works. Heresies, that is to say, sects, have always been in the church, as we have said before in divers places. Notwithstanding the pope is an arch-heretic, and the head of all heretics: for he hath filled the world as it were with a huge flood of infinite sects and errors. What concord and unity was there in so great diversity of the monks and other religious orders? No one sort or sect of them could agree with another: for they measured their holiness by the straightness of their orders: hereof it cometh that the Carthusian will needs be counted holier than the Franciscan, and so likewise the rest. Wherefore there is no unity of spirit, nor concord of minds, but great discord in the papistical church. There is no conformity in their doctrine, faith, religion, or serving of God, but all things are clean contrary. Con-

trariwise, among the Christians, the word, faith, religion, sacraments, service, Christ, God, heart, soul, mind, and understanding are all one and common to all; and, as touching outward conversation, the diversity of states, degrees, and conditions of life, hindereth this spiritual concord and unity nothing at all, as before I have said. And they which have his unity of the spirit, can certainly judge of all sects, which otherwise no man understandeth: as indeed no divine in the papacy understood, that Paul in this place condemneth all the worshippings, religions, continency, honest conversation, and holy life in outward appearance, of all the papists, sectaries, and schismatics: but they all thought that he speaketh of the gross idolatry and heresies of the Gentiles and Turks, which manifestly blaspheme the name of Christ.

Drunkenness, Gluttony.

Paul doth not say that to eat and drink be works of the flesh, but to be drunken and to surfeit, which of all other vices are most common at this day. Whoso are given to this beastly dissoluteness and excess, let them know that they are not spiritual, how much soever they boast themselves so to be, but they follow the flesh, and perform the filthy works thereof. Therefore is this horrible sentence pronounced against them, that they shall not be inheritors of the kingdom of God. Paul would therefore that Christians should fly drunkenness and surfeiting, living soberly and moderately without all excess, lest by pampering the flesh they should be provoked to wantonness: as indeed after surfeiting and belly-cheer, the flesh is wont to wax wanton, and to be inflamed with outrageous lust. But it is not sufficient only to restrain this outrageous wantonness and lust of the flesh, which followeth drunkenness and surfeiting, or any manner of excess, but also the flesh when it is most sober, and in his best temperance, must be subdued and repressed, lest it fulfil his lusts and desires. For it oftentimes cometh to pass, that even they which are most sober are tempted most of all: as Hierom writeth of himself—"My face (saith he) was pale with fasting, and my
"mind was inflamed with fleshly desires in my cold body,
"and although my flesh was half dead already, yet the

“flames of unclean lust boiled within me.” Hereof I myself also had experience when I was a monk. The heat therefore of unclean lusts is not quenched by fasting only, but we must be aided also by the spirit, that is by the meditation of God’s word, faith, and prayer. Indeed fasting represseth the gross assaults of fleshly lust; but the desires of the flesh are overcome by no abstinence from meats and drinks, but only by the meditation of the word of God and invocation of Christ.

Verse 21. *And such like.*

For it is impossible to reckon up all the works of the flesh.

Verse 21. *Whereof I tell you, as I have also told you before, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

This is a very hard and a terrible saying, but yet very necessary against false Christians and careless hypocrites, which brag of the gospel, of faith, and of the spirit, and yet in all security they perform the works of the flesh. But chiefly the heretics, being puffed up with opinions of spiritual matters (as they dream) are possessed of the devil, and altogether carnal; therefore they perform and fulfil the desires of the flesh, even with all the powers of the soul. Therefore most necessary it was, that so horrible and terrible a sentence should be pronounced by the apostle against such careless contemners and obstinate hypocrites (namely, that all they which do such works of the flesh as Paul hath recited, shall not inherit the kingdom of God); that yet some of them being terrified by this severe sentence, may begin to fight against the works of the flesh by the spirit, that they accomplish not the same.

Verse 22. *But the fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, sweetness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness or meekness, temperance.*

The apostle saith not, the works of the spirit, as he said the works of the flesh, but he adorneth these Christian virtues with a more honourable name, calling them

the fruits of the spirit. For they bring with them most excellent fruits and commodities: for they that have them give glory to God, and with the same do allure and provoke others to embrace the doctrine and faith of Christ.

Love.

It had been enough to have said love, and no more; for love extendeth itself unto all the fruits of the spirit. And, in 1 Cor. xiii. Paul attributeth to love all the fruits which are done in the spirit, when he saith, Love is patient, courteous, &c. Notwithstanding he would set it here by itself amongst the rest of the fruits of the spirit, and in the first place, thereby to admonish the Christians that before all things they should love one another, giving honour one to another (Rom. xii. 10.), every man esteeming better of another than of himself, and serving one another, because they have Christ and the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, and because of the word, baptism, and other gifts of God which Christians have.

Joy.

This is the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride, that is to say, sweet cogitations of Christ, wholesome exhortation, pleasant songs or psalms, praises and thanksgiving, whereby the godly do instruct, stir up, and refresh themselves. Therefore God loveth not heaviness and doubtfulness of spirit: he hateth uncomfortable doctrine, heavy and sorrowful cogitations, and loveth cheerful hearts. For therefore hath he sent his Son, not to oppress us with heaviness and sorrow, but to cheer up our souls in him. For this cause the prophets, the apostles, and Christ himself do exhort us, yea they command us to rejoice and be glad (Zech. ix. 9.): Rejoice thou daughter of Zion, be joyful thou daughter of Jerusalem, for behold thy king cometh to thee. And in the Psalms it is often said, Be joyful in the Lord. Paul saith, Rejoice in the Lord always, &c. And Christ saith, Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. Where this joy of the spirit is, there the heart inwardly rejoiceth through faith in Christ, with full assurance that he is our saviour and our bishop, and outwardly it expresseth this joy with

words and gestures. Also, the faithful rejoice when they see that the gospel spreadeth abroad, that many be won to the faith, and that the kingdom of Christ is enlarged.

Peace.

Both towards God and Men, that Christians may be peaceable and quiet; not contentious, nor hating one another, but one bearing another's burden through long-suffering or perseverance, without the which peace cannot continue, and therefore Paul putteth it next after peace.

Long-suffering, or perseverance.

Whereby a man doth not only bear adversities, injuries, reproaches, and such like, but also with patience waiteth for the amendment of those which have done him any wrong. When the devil cannot by force overcome those which are tempted, then seeketh he to overcome them by long continuance. For he knoweth that we be earthen vessels, which cannot long endure and hold out many knocks and violent strokes; therefore with long continuance of temptations he overcometh many. To vanquish these his continual assaults we must use long-suffering, which patiently looketh not only for the amendment of those which do us wrong, but also for the end of those temptations which the devil raiseth up against us.

Gentleness.

Which is, when a man is gentle and tractable in his conversation and in his whole life. For such as will be true followers of the gospel, must not be sharp and bitter, but gentle, mild, courteous, and fair spoken, which should encourage others to delight in their company; which can wink at other men's faults, or at least expound them to the best; which will be well contented to yield and give place to others, contented to bear with those which are froward and intractable; as the very heathen said: "Thou must know the manners of thy friend, but thou must not hate them." Such a one was our Saviour Christ, as every where is to be seen in the gospel. It is written of Peter, that he wept so often as he remembered the sweet mildness of Christ, which he used in his daily

conversation. It is an excellent virtue, and most necessary in every kind of life.

Goodness.

Which is, when a man willingly helpeth others in their necessity, by giving, lending, and such other means.

Faith.

When Paul here reckoneth faith amongst the fruits of the spirit, it is manifest that he speaketh not of faith which is in Christ, but of the fidelity and humanity of one man towards another. Hereupon he saith, in the 13th chapter of the first to the Corinthians, that charity believeth all things. Therefore, he that hath this faith is not suspicious, but mild, and taketh all things to the best. And, although he be deceived, and findeth himself to be mocked, yet such is his patience and softness, that he letteth it pass: briefly, he is ready to believe all men, but he trusteth not all. On the contrary, where this virtue is lacking, there men are suspicious, froward, wayward, dogged, and so neither will believe any thing, nor give place to any body. They can suffer nothing. Whatsoever a man saith or doth never so well, they cavil and slander it, so that whoso serveth not their humour, can never please them. Therefore it is impossible for them to keep charity, friendship, concord, and peace with men. But, if these virtues be taken away, what is this life but biting and devouring one of another? Faith, therefore, in this place is, when one man giveth credit to another in things pertaining to this present life. For what manner of life should we lead in this world, if one man should not credit another?

Meekness.

Which is, when a man is not lightly moved or provoked to anger. There be infinite occasions in this life which provoke men to anger, but the godly overcome them by meekness.

Temperance, chastity or continency.

This is a sobriety or modesty in the whole life of man, which virtue Paul setteth against the works of the flesh.

He would therefore that Christians should live soberly and chastely, and that they should be no adulterers, no fornicators, no wantons: and, if they cannot live chastely, he would have them to marry: also, that they should not be contentious or quarrellers, that they should not be given to drunkenness or surfeiting, but that they should abstain from all these things. Chastity or continency containeth all these. Hierom expoundeth it of virginity only, as though they that be married could not be chaste; or as though the apostle did write these things only to virgins. In the first and second chapter to Titus, he warneth all bishops, young women, and married folks, both man and wife, to be chaste and pure.

Verse 23. *Against such, there is no law.*

Indeed there is a law, but not against such; as he saith also in another place: The law is not given to the righteous man. For the righteous liveth in such wise, that he hath no need of any law to admonish or to constrain him; but, without constraint of the law he willingly doth those things which the law requireth. Therefore the law cannot accuse or condemn those that believe in Christ. Indeed the law troubleth and terrifieth our consciences; but Christ apprehended by faith, vanquisheth it with all his terrors and threatenings. To them, therefore, the law is utterly abolished, and hath no power to accuse them; for they do that of their own accord which the law requireth. They have received the Holy Ghost by faith, who will not suffer them to be idle. Although the flesh resist, yet do they walk after the spirit. So a Christian accomplisheth the law inwardly by faith (for Christ is the perfection of the law unto righteousness to all that do believe); outwardly by works and remission of sins. But those which perform the works or desires of the flesh, the law doth accuse and condemn both civilly and spiritually.

Verse 24. *For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof.*

This whole place concerning works sheweth that the true believers are no hypocrites. Therefore let no man deceive himself. For whosoever, saith he, pertain unto Christ, have crucified the flesh with all the vices and lusts

thereof. For the saints, inasmuch as they have not yet utterly put off the corrupt and sinful flesh, are inclined to sin, and do neither fear nor love God so perfectly as they ought to do. Also they be provoked to anger, to envy, to impatiency, to unclean lusts, and such like motions, which notwithstanding they accomplish not: for (as Paul here saith) they crucify the flesh, with all the affections and lusts thereof. Which thing they do, not only when they repress the wantonness of the flesh with fasting and other exercises, but also (as Paul said before) when they walk according to the spirit; that is, when they being admonished by the threatenings of God, whereby he sheweth that he will severely punish sin, are afraid to commit sin: also, when they being armed with the word of God, with faith and with prayer, do not obey the lusts of the flesh.

When they resist the flesh after this manner, they nail it to the cross with the lust and desires thereof; so that although the flesh be yet alive, yet can it not perform that which it would do, forasmuch as it is bound both hand and foot, and fast nailed to the cross. The faithful then, so long as they live here, do crucify the flesh, that is to say, they feel the lusts thereof, but they obey them not. For they being furnished with the armour of God, that is, with faith, hope, and the sword of the spirit, do resist the flesh, and with these spiritual nails they fasten the same unto the cross, so that it is constrained to be subject to the spirit. Afterwards, when they die, they put it off wholly; and when they shall rise again from death to life, they shall have a pure and uncorrupt flesh without all affections and lusts.

CHAP. VI.

If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit.

THE apostle reckoned before amongst the works of the flesh heresy and envy, and pronounced sentence against those which are envious, and which are authors of sects, that they should not inherit the kingdom of God. And now, as if he had forgotten that which he said a little before, he again reproveth those which provoke and envy one another. Why doth he so? Was it not sufficient to have done it once? Indeed he doth it of purpose; for he taketh occasion here to inveigh against that execrable vice of vain-glory, which was the cause of the troubles that were in all the churches of Galatia, and hath been always most pernicious and hurtful to the whole church of Christ. Therefore, in his epistle to Titus, he would not that a proud man should be ordained a bishop. For pride (as Augustine truly saith) is the mother of all heresies, or rather the head-spring of all sin and confusion; which thing all histories, as well holy as profane, do witness.

Now, vain-glory or arrogancy hath always been a common poison in the world, which the very heathen poets and historiographers have always vehemently reprov'd. There is no village wherein there is not some one or other to be found, that would be counted wiser, and be more esteemed than all the rest. But they are chiefly infected with this disease, which stand upon their reputation for learning and wisdom. In this case no man will yield to another, according to this saying: Ye shall not lightly find a man that will yield unto others the praise of wit and skill. For it is a goodly thing to see men point at one, and say, This is he. But it is not so hurtful in private persons, no nor in any kind of magistrate, as it is in them that have any charge in the church. Albeit, in civil government (specially if it be in great personages), it is not only a cause of troubles and ruins of common-weals, but also the troubles and alterations of king-

doms and empires; which thing the histories both of the scripture and profane writers do witness.

But when this poison creepeth into the church or spiritual kingdom, it cannot be expressed how hurtful it is. For there is no contention as touching learning, wit, beauty, riches, kingdoms, empires, and such like; but, as touching salvation or damnation, eternal life or eternal death. Therefore Paul earnestly exhorteth the ministers of the word to fly this vice, saying, If we live in the spirit, &c. As if he should say: If it be true that we live in the spirit, let us also proceed and walk in the spirit. For where the spirit is, it reneweth men, and worketh in them new motions: that is to say, whereas they were before vain-glorious, wrathful, and envious, it maketh them now humble, gentle, and patient. Such men seek not their own glory, but the glory of God: they do not provoke one another, or envy one another, but give place one to another, and in giving honour prevent one another. Contrariwise, they that be desirous of glory and envy one another, may boast that they have the spirit, and live after the spirit: but they deceive themselves, they follow the flesh, and do the works thereof, and they have their judgment already, that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Now, as nothing is more dangerous to the church than this execrable vice, so is there nothing more common: for, when God sendeth forth labourers into his harvest, by-and-by Satan raiseth up his ministers also, who will in no case be counted inferior to those that are rightly called. Here straightway riseth dissension. The wicked will not yield one hair's breadth to the godly; for they dream that they far pass them in wit, in learning, in godliness, in spirit, and other virtues. Much less ought the godly to yield to the wicked, lest the doctrine of faith come in danger. Moreover, such is the nature of the ministers of Satan, that they can make a goodly shew that they are very charitable, humble, lovers of concord, and are endued with other fruits of the spirit: also, they protest that they seek nothing else but the glory of God and the salvation of men's souls; and yet are they full of vain-glory, doing all things for none other end but to get praise and estimation among men. To be short, they think that gain is godliness (1 Tim. vi. 5.), and that the ministry of the word is delivered unto them, that they

may get fame and estimation thereby. Wherefore they cannot but be authors of dissensions and sects.

Forasmuch then as the vain-glory of the false apostles was the cause that the churches of Galatia were troubled and forsook Paul, therefore in this chapter specially his purpose was to suppress that execrable vice; yea, this mischief gave the apostle occasion to write this whole epistle. And if he had not so done, all his travel bestowed in preaching of the gospel among the Galatians had been spent in vain. For in his absence the false apostles, which were men in outward shew of great authority, reigned in Galatia, who, besides that they would seem to seek the glory of Christ and the salvation of the Galatians, pretended also that they had been conversant with the apostles, and that they followed their footsteps, saying, that Paul had not seen Christ in the flesh, nor had been conversant with the rest of the apostles, and therefore they made no account of him, but rejected his doctrine, and boasted their own to be true and sincere. Thus they troubled the Galatians, and raised sects among them, so that they provoked and envied one another; which was a sure token, that neither the teachers nor hearers lived and walked after the spirit, but followed the flesh and fulfilled the works thereof, and so consequently lost the true doctrine, faith, Christ, and all the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and were now become worse than the heathen.

Notwithstanding he doth not only inveigh against the false apostles, which in his time troubled the churches of Galatia, but also he foresaw in spirit that there should be an infinite number of such even to the world's end, which, being infected with this pernicious vice, should thrust themselves into the church, boasting of the spirit and heavenly doctrine, and under this pretence should quite overthrow the true doctrine and faith. Many such have we also seen in these our days, who have thrust themselves into the kingdom of the spirit, that is to say, into the ministry of the word: and by this hypocrisy they have purchased unto themselves fame and estimation, that they were great doctors and pillars of the gospel, and such as lived in the spirit, and walked according to the same. But, because their glory consisted in men's mouths, and not in God, therefore it could not be firm and stable; but, according to Paul's prophesy, it turned to their own con-

fusion, and their end was destruction. For the wicked shall not stand in judgment, but shall be taken away like chaff, and scattered abroad with the wind (Psalm i. 6.).

The same judgment remaineth for all such as in preaching the gospel seek their own profit, and not the glory of Jesus Christ. For the gospel is not delivered unto us that we should thereby seek our own praise and glory, or that the people should honour and magnify us, which are the ministers thereof; but to the end that the benefit and glory of Christ might be preached and published, and that the Father might be glorified in his mercy offered unto us in Christ his Son, whom he delivered for us all, and with him hath given us all things. Wherefore the gospel is a doctrine wherein we ought to seek nothing less than our own glory. It setteth forth unto us heavenly and eternal things, which are not our own, which we have neither done nor deserved; but it offereth the same unto us, to us, I say, which are unworthy, and that through the mere goodness and grace of God. Why should we then seek praise and glory thereby? He therefore that seeketh his own glory in the gospel, speaketh of himself; and he that speaketh of himself is a liar, and there is unrighteousness in him. Contrariwise, he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him (John vii.).

Paul therefore giveth earnest charge to all the ministers of the word, saying: If we live in the spirit, let us walk in the spirit; that is to say, let us abide in the doctrine of truth, which hath been taught unto us, in brotherly love and spiritual concord; and let us preach Christ and the glory of God in simplicity of heart, and let us confess that we have received all things of him; let us not think more of ourselves than of others; let us raise up no sects. For this is not to walk rightly, but rather to range out of the way, and to set up a new and perverse way of walking.

Hereby we may understand that God, of his special grace, maketh the teachers of the gospel subject to the cross and to all kinds of afflictions, for the salvation of themselves and of the people; for otherwise they could by no means suppress and beat down this beast, which is called vain-glory. For if no persecution, no cross or reproach followed the doctrine of the gospel, but only praise, reputation, and glory amongst men, then would

all the professors thereof be infected and perish through the poison of vain-glory. Hierom saith, that he had seen many which could suffer great inconveniences in their body and goods, but none that could despise their own praises. For it is almost impossible for a man not to be puffed up, when he heareth any thing spoken in the praise of his own virtues. Paul, notwithstanding that he had the spirit of Christ, saith, that there was given unto him the messenger of Satan to buffet him, because he should not be exalted out of measure, through the greatness of his revelations. Therefore Augustine saith very well, "If a minister of the word be praised, he is in danger: if a brother despise or dispraise him, he is also in danger. He that heareth a preacher of the word, ought to reverence him for the word's sake; but, if he be proud thereof, he is in danger. Contrariwise, if he be despised, he is out of danger, but so is not he which despiseth him."

Wherefore we must honour our great benefit, that is, of the preaching of the word and receiving of the sacraments (Rom. xiv. 16.). We must also reverence one another, according to that saying, In giving honour one to another, &c. (Rom. xii. 10.). But wheresoever this is done, by-and-by the flesh is tickled with vain-glory, and waxeth proud. For there is none (no not among the godly) which would not rather be praised than dispraised, except perhaps some will be so well established in this behalf, that he will be moved neither with praises nor reproaches: as that woman said of David (2 Sam. xiv.) My lord the king is like an angel of God, which will neither be moved with blessing nor cursing. Likewise, Paul saith, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, &c. (1 Cor. vi. 8.) Such men as be neither puffed up with praise, nor thrown down with dispraise, but endeavour simply to set forth the benefit and glory of Christ, and to seek the salvation of souls, do walk orderly. Contrariwise, they which wax proud in hearing of their own praises, not seeking the glory of Christ but their own; also they, which being moved with reproaches and slanders, do forsake the ministry of the word, walk not orderly.

Wherefore let every one see that he walk orderly, and specially such as boast of the spirit. If thou be praised, know that it is not thou that is praised, but Christ, to

whom all praise and honour is due. For in that thou teachest the word purely and livest godly, these are not thine own gifts, but the gifts of God: therefore thou art not praised, but God in thee. When thou dost acknowledge this, thou wilt walk orderly, and not be puffed up with vain glory (1 Cor. iv. 7.)? but wilt confess that thou hast received the same of God, and wilt not be moved with injuries, reproaches, or persecution to forsake thy calling.

God, therefore, of his special grace at this day, covereth our glory with infamy, reproach, mortal hatred, cruel persecution, railing and cursing of the whole world; also with the contempt and ingratitude even of those among whom we live, as well the common sort as also the citizens, gentlemen and noblemen (whose enmity, hatred, and persecution against the gospel, like as it is privy and inward, so is it more dangerous than the cruelty and outrageous dealings of our open enemies), that we should not wax proud of the gifts of God in us. This millstone must be hanged about our neck, that we be not infected with that pestilent poison of vain-glory. Some there be of our side, which love and reverence us for the ministry of the word; but where there is one that reve- renceth us, there be on the other side an hundred that hate and persecute us. These spiteful dealings, therefore, and these persecutions of our enemies, this great contempt and ingratitude, this cruel and privy hatred of them among whom we live, are such pleasant sights, and make us so merry, that we easily forget vain-glory.

Wherefore, rejoicing in the Lord who is our glory, we remain in order. Those gifts which we have, we acknowledge to be the gifts of God, and not our own, given for the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph. iv. 12.), therefore we be not proud of them. For we know that more is required of them to whom much is committed, than of them which have received but little. Moreover, we know that there is no respect of persons before God (Acts x. 34.). Therefore a poor artificer, faithfully using the gift which God hath given him, pleaseth God no less than a preacher of the word; for he serveth God in the same faith and with the same spirit. Wherefore we ought no less to regard the meanest Christians than they regard

us. And by this means shall we continue free from the poison of vain-glory, and walk in the spirit.

Contrariwise, the fantastical spirits, which seek their own glory, the favour of men, the peace of the world, the ease of the flesh, and not the glory of Christ, nor yet the health of men's souls (although they protest that they seek nothing else), cannot chuse but discover themselves in commending their own doctrine and industry, and dispraising other men's, and all to get them a name and praise. These vain-glorious spirits do not rejoice and glory in the Lord; but then do they glory, then are they stout and hardy, when they are magnified of the people, whose hearts they win by wonderful slights and subtleties; for in their words, gestures, and writings they can counterfeit and dissemble all things. But when they are not praised and commended of the people, then be they the most fearful men in the world; for they hate and shun the cross of Christ and persecution. On the contrary, when they are praised and magnified (as I said) none are so stout, no Hector or Achilles so bold and hardy as they.

Such a sly and crafty beast therefore is flesh, that for none other cause it forsaketh his function, corrupteth true doctrine, and breaketh the concord of the church, than only upon this cursed vain-glory. Therefore it is not without cause that Paul so sharply inveigheth against it both here and in other places, as before in the fourth chapter. They are (saith he) jealous over you amiss; yea they would exclude you from me, that ye should altogether love them: that is to say, they would discredit me, that they themselves might be famous. They seek not Christ's glory and your salvation, but their own glory, my reproach, and your bondage.

Verse 26. *Let us not be desirous of vain-glory.*

Which is to glory, not in God (as I have said), but in lies, in the opinion, liking, and estimation of the people. Here is no right foundation of true glory, but a false foundation, and therefore impossible long to stand. He that praiseth a man as he is a man is a liar; for there is nothing praise-worthy in him, but all things are worthy of condemnation. Therefore, as touching our person, this is

our glory, that all men have sinned and are guilty of everlasting death before God. But the case is otherwise when our ministry is praised. Wherefore we must not only wish, but also to the uttermost of our power endeavour, that men may magnify it and have it in due reverence; for this shall turn to their salvation. Paul warneth the Romans that they offend no man, to the end (saith he) that our commodity be not evil spoken of (Rom. xiv. 16.). And in another place, that our ministry be not reprehended (2 Cor. vi. 3.). Therefore, when our ministry is praised, we be not praised for our own person's sake, but (as the psalm saith) we are praised in God and in his holy name.

Verse 26. *Provoking one another, and envying one another.*

Here he describeth the effect and fruit of vain-glory. He that teacheth any error, or is an author of any new doctrine, cannot but provoke others; and when they do not approve and receive his doctrine, by-and-by he becometh to hate them most bitterly. We see at this day with what deadly hatred the sectaries are inflamed against us, because we will not give place to them, and approve their errors. We did not first provoke them, nor spread abroad any wicked opinion in the world; but rebuking certain abuses in the church, and faithfully teaching the article of justification, have walked in good order. But they, forsaking this article, have taught many things contrary to the word of God. Here, because we would not lose the truth of the gospel, we have set ourselves against them, and have condemned their errors: which thing, because they could not abide, they did not only provoke us first without cause, but also do still most spitefully hate us, and that upon no other occasion but only upon vain-glory; for they would gladly deface us, that they alone might rule and reign; for they imagine that it is a great glory to profess the gospel, whereas indeed there is no greater ignomy in the sight of the world.

CHAP. VI.

Verse 1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken with any fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one with the spirit of meekness.

He that diligently weigheth the words of the apostle, may plainly perceive that he speaketh not of errors and offences against doctrine, but of far lesser sins, into the which a man falleth not wilfully and of set purpose, but of infirmity. And hereof it cometh that he useth so gentle and fatherly word, not calling it error or sin, but a fault. Again, to the intent to diminish, and as it were to excuse the sin, and to remove the whole fault from man, he addeth, If any man be overtaken, that is to say, be beguiled of the devil or of the flesh. Yea, and this term or name of man helpeth something also to diminish and qualify the matter. As if he should say: What is so proper unto man as to fall, to be deceived, and to err? So saith Moses in Lev. vi. 3. They are wont to sin like men. Wherefore this is a sentence full of heavenly comfort, which once in a terrible conflict delivered me from death. Forasmuch then as the saints in this life do not only live in the flesh, but now and then also, through the enticement of the devil, fulfil the lusts of the flesh, that is to say, fall into impatiency, envy, wrath, error, doubting, distrust, and such like (for Satan always assaileth both, that is, as well the purity of doctrine, which he laboureth to take away by sects and dissensions, as also the soundness of life, which he corrupteth with daily offences): therefore Paul teacheth how such men that are fallen should be dealt withal, namely, that they which are strong, should raise up and restore them again with the spirit of meekness.

These things it behoveth them specially to know, which are in the ministry of the word, lest whilst they go about to touch all things to the quick, they forget the fatherly and motherly affection which Paul here requireth of those that have the charge of souls. And of this precept he hath set forth an example (2 Cor. ii.), where he saith, that it was sufficient that he which was excommunicate was rebuked of many, and that they ought now to forgive

him and comfort him, lest he should be swallowed up with over-much sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you (saith he) use charity towards him. Therefore the pastors and ministers must indeed sharply rebuke those which are fallen, but when they see that they are sorrowful for their offences, then let them begin to raise them up again, to comfort them, and to diminish and qualify their faults as much as they can, but yet through mercy only, which they must set against sin, lest they that be fallen be swallowed up with over-much heaviness. As the Holy Ghost is precise in maintaining and defending the doctrine of faith; so is he mild and pitiful in forbearing and qualifying men's sins, if they which have committed them be so sorrowful for the same.

But as for the pope's synagogue, like as in all other matters, it hath both taught and done clean contrary to the commandment and example of Paul, even so hath it done in this thing also. The pope, with all his bishops, have been very tyrants and butchers of men's consciences. For they have burdened them from time to time with new traditions, and for every light matter have vexed them with their excommunications: and that they might the more easily obey their vain terrors, they annexed thereunto these sentences of Pope Gregory: "It is the part and property of good minds to be afraid of a fault where no fault is." And again, "Our censures must be feared, yea though they be unjust and wrongful." By these sayings (which were brought into the church by the devil), they stablished their excommunication, and this majesty of the papacy, which is so terrible to the whole world. There is no need of such humility and goodness of minds, to be afraid of a fault where none is. O thou Romish Satan, who gave thee this power to terrify and condemn men's consciences, that were terrified enough before with thy unjust and wrongful sentences? Thou oughtest rather to have raised them up, to have delivered them from false fears, and to have brought them from lies and errors to the truth. This thou omittest, and according to thy title and name, to wit, the man of sin and child of perdition, thou imaginest a fault where no fault is. This is indeed the craft and deceit of antichrist, whereby he hath most mightily established his excommunication and tyranny. For whosoever despiseth his un-

just sentences was counted very obstinate and wicked; as some princes did, howbeit against their consciences: for in those times of darkness they did not understand that the pope's curses were vain.

Let them, therefore, to whom the charge of men's consciences is committed, learn by this commandment of Paul, how they ought to handle those that have offended. Brethren (saith he), if any man be overtaken with sin, do not trouble him or make him more sorrowful: be not bitter unto him; do not reject or condemn him, but amend him and raise him up again; and by the spirit of lenity and mildness restore that which in him is decayed by the deceit of the devil, or by the weakness of the flesh. For the kingdom whereunto ye are called, is a kingdom not of terror or heaviness, but of boldness, joy, and gladness. Therefore, if ye see any brother cast down and afflicted by occasion of sin which he hath committed, run unto him, and reaching out your hand raise him up again, comfort him with sweet words, and embrace him with motherly arms. As for those that be hard-hearted and obstinate, which without fear continue careless in their sins, rebuke them sharply. But on the other side (as I said), they that be overtaken with any sin, and are heavy and sorrowful for their fault which they have committed, must be raised up and admonished by you that are spiritual, and that in the spirit of meekness, and not in the zeal of severe justice, as some have done, who, when they should have refreshed thirsty consciences with some sweet consolation, gave them gall and vinegar to drink, as the Jews did unto Christ hanging upon the cross. Ezekiel saith of the shepherds of Israel, that they ruled the flock of God with cruelty and rigour; but a brother ought to comfort his brother that is fallen with a loving and a meek spirit. Again: Let him that is fallen hear the word of him that raiseth him up, and believe it. For God would not have those that are bruised to be cast away, but to be raised up, as the Psalm saith. For God hath bestowed more upon them than we have done, that is to say, the life and blood of his own son. Wherefore, we ought also to receive, to aid and comfort such with all mildness and gentleness.

Verse 1. *Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

This is a very necessary admonition to beat down the sharp dealings of such pastors as shew no pity in raising up and restoring again them which are fallen. "There is no sin (saith Augustine) which any man hath done, but another man may do the same." We stand on a slippery ground; therefore, if we wax proud and leave off our duty, there is nothing so easy unto us as to fall. It was well said, therefore, of one in the book called the Lives of the Fathers, when it was told him that one of his brethren was fallen into whoredom, "He fell yesterday" (saith he), and I may fall to-day." Paul therefore addeth this earnest admonition, that the pastors should not be rigorous and unmerciful towards the offenders, or measure their own holiness by other men's sins; but that they should bear a motherly affection towards them, and think thus with themselves: This man is fallen; it may be that I also shall fall more dangerously and more shamefully than he did. And if they which be so ready to judge and condemn other, would well consider their own sin, they should find the sins of others which are fallen to be but motes, and their own sins to be great beams (Matt. vii. 3.).

Let him therefore that standeth take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. x. 12.). If David, which was so holy a man, full of faith and the spirit of God, which had such notable promises of God, which also did so many and great things for the Lord, did fall so grievously, and being now stricken in years, was overthrown with youthful lusts, after so many and divers temptations wherewith God had exercised him, why should we presume of our own constancy? And God by such examples doth shew unto us, first our own weakness, that we should not wax proud, but stand in fear: then he sheweth unto us his judgments, that he can bear nothing less than pride, either against himself or against our brethren. Paul therefore saith, not without cause, *Considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* They that be-exercis'd with temptations, do know how necessary this commandment is. On the other side, they which be not tried therewith do not understand Paul, and therefore are not touched with any pity towards them that are fallen: as was to be seen in popery, where nothing else reigned but tyranny and cruelty.

Verse 2. Bear ye one another's burden, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

This is a gentle commandment, to the which he joineth a great commendation. The law of Christ is the law of love. Christ, after he had redeemed us, renewed us and made us his church, gave us no other law but the law of mutual love. A new commandment give I to you, that ye love together, &c. (John xiii.) And to love is not (as the popish sophisters dream) to wish well one to another, but one to bear another's burden, that is, to bear those things which be grievous unto thee, and which thou wouldest not willingly bear. Therefore, Christians must have strong shoulders and mighty bones, that they may bear flesh, that is, the weakness of their brethren; for Paul saith, that they have burdens and troubles. Love therefore is mild, courteous, patient, not in receiving but in giving. For it is constrained to wink at many things, and to bear them (1 Cor. xiii. 4.). Faithful teachers do see in the church many errors and offences, which they are compelled to bear. In the common-weal, subjects are never so obedient to the laws of the magistrates as they should be. Therefore, unless magistrates can wink and dissemble in time and place, he shall never be meet to rule the common-wealth. In household affairs there be many things done which displease the master of the house. But if we can bear and wink at our own vices and offences which we daily commit, let us also bear other men's faults, according to this saying, Bear ye one another's burden, &c. Again, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Rom. xiii. 9.).

Seeing then there be vices in every state of life, and in all men, therefore Paul setteth forth the law of Christ unto the faithful, whereby he exhorteth them to bear one another's burden. They which do not so, do plainly witness that they understand not one jot of the law of Christ, which is the law of love; which, as Paul saith (1 Cor. xiii.) believeth all things, hopeth all things, and beareth all the burdens of the brethren; yet always holding, notwithstanding the first commandment, wherein they that offend do not transgress the law of Christ, that is to say, the law of charity, they do not hurt nor offend their neighbour, but Christ and his kingdom, which he

hath purchased with his own blood. This kingdom is not maintained by the law of charity, but by the word of God, by faith, and by the Holy Ghost. This commandment then of bearing one another's burden belongeth not to them which deny Christ, and not only do not acknowledge their sin, but also defend it; neither doth it belong unto those which continue still in their sins (who also do partly deny Christ) but such must be forsaken, lest we become partakers of their evil works. (1 Tim. v. 22.) On the contrary, they which willingly hear the word of God and believe, and yet notwithstanding against their will do fall into sin, and after they be admonished, do not only receive such admonition gladly, but also detest their sin and endeavour to amend; these, I say, are they which be overtaken with sin, and have the burdens that Paul commandeth us to bear. In this case let us not be rigorous and merciless; but after the example of Christ, who beareth and forbeareth such, let us bear and forbear them also; for if he punish not such (which thing notwithstanding he might justly do) much less ought we so to do.

Verse 3. *For if any man think himself to be somewhat, when indeed he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.*

Here again he reprehendeth the authors of sects, and painteth them out in their right colours, to wit, that they be hard-hearted, merciless, and without compassion, such as despise the weak, and will not vouchsafe to bear their burdens, but require all things straitly and precisely (like wayward husbands and severe schoolmasters) whom nothing can please but what they themselves do; who also will be always thy bitter enemies, unless thou commend whatsoever they say or do, and in all things frame thyself according to their appetite. Of all men, therefore, they are the proudest, and dare take upon them all things. And this is that Paul saith here, they think themselves to be somewhat, that is to say, that they have the Holy Ghost, that they understand all the mysteries of the scriptures, that they cannot err, &c.

Wherefore Paul added very well, that they are nothing; but that they deceive themselves with the foolish persuasions of their own wisdom and holiness. They understand nothing therefore, either of Christ or of the law of Christ; for if they did, they would say, brother,

thou art infected with such a vice, and I am infected with another. God hath forgiven me ten thousand talents, and I will forgive thee an hundred pence. (Matt. xviii. 24, 28.) But when they will require all things so exactly, and with such perfection, and will in no wise bear the burdens of the weak, they offend many with this their sharpness and severity, who begin to despise, hate, and shun them, and seek not comfort or counsel at their hands, nor regard what or how they teach.--Whereas, contrariwise, pastors ought so to behave themselves towards those over whom they have taken charge, that they might love and reverence them, not for their person, but for their office and Christian virtues which especially ought to shine in them.

Paul therefore, in this place, hath rightly painted out such severe and merciless saints, when he saith, They think themselves to be somewhat, that is to say, being puffed up with their own foolish opinions and vain dreams, they have a marvellous persuasion of their own knowledge and holiness, and yet in very deed they are nothing, and do but deceive themselves. For it is a manifest beguiling when a man persuadeth himself that he is somewhat, when indeed he is nothing. Such men are well described in the third of the Apocalypse in these words, Thou sayst I am rich and increased with goods, and hath need of nothing, and knowest not how thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

Verse 4. *But let every man try his own work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself only, and not in another.*

He goeth forward in painting out those proud and vain-glorious fellows. For the desire of vain-glory is an odious and cursed vice, it is the occasion of all evils, and troubleth both common-weals and consciences. And specially in spiritual matters it is such an evil as is incurable. And albeit that this place may be understood of the works of this life or civil conversation, yet principally the apostle speaketh of the work of the ministry, and inveigheth against those vain-glorious heads, which with their fantastical opinions do trouble well-instructed consciences.

And this is the property of those which are infected with this poison of vain-glory, that they have no regard

whether their works, that is to say, their ministry. be pure, simple, and faithful, or not; but this they only seek that they may have the praise of the people. So the false apostles, when they saw that Paul preached the gospel purely to the Galatians, and that they could not bring any better doctrine, they began to find fault at those things which he had godly and faithfully taught, and to prefer their own doctrine before the doctrine of Paul, and by this subtilty they won the favour of the Galatians, and brought Paul into hatred among them. There the proud and vain-glorious do join these three vices together. First, they are greedy of glory. Secondly, they are marvellous witty, and wily in finding fault with other men's doings and sayings, thereby to purchase the love, the well-liking, and praise of the people. And thirdly, When they have once gotten a name (though it be by other men's travel) they become so stout and full of stomach, that they dare venture upon all things. Therefore they are pernicious and pestilent fellows, whom I hate even with my very heart; for they seek their own, and not that which is of Jesus Christ, &c. (Phil. ii. 21.)

Against such Paul speaketh here. As if he should say: Such vain-glorious spirits do their work, that is to say, they teach the gospel to this end that they may win praise and estimation among men, that is, that they may be counted excellent doctors, with whom Paul and others might not be compared. And when they have gotten this estimation, then begin they to reprehend the sayings and doings of other men, and highly commend their own: and by this subtilty they bewitch the minds of the people, who, because they have itching ears, are not only delighted with new opinions, but also rejoice to see those teachers which they had afore, to be abased and defaced by these new upstarts and glorious heads, and all because they are come to a fulness and loathing of the word.

Thus it ought not to be, saith he, but let every man be faithful in his office: let him not seek his own glory, nor depend upon the praise and commendation of the people, but let his only care be to do his work truly, that is, let him teach the gospel purely. And if his work be sincere and sound, let him assure himself that he shall lack no praise either before God, or among the godly. In the mean space, if he be not commended of the unthankful world, let this nothing move him; for he knoweth that

the end of his ministry is, not that he, but that Christ should be glorified thereby. Wherefore, being furnished with the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, let him say: I began not to teach the gospel to the end that the world should magnify me, and therefore I will not shrink from that which I have begun, if the world hate, slander, or persecute me. He that is such a one, teacheth the word, and attendeth upon his office faithfully, without any worldly respect, that is, without regard of glory or gain, without the strength, wisdom, or authority of any man. He leaneth not to the praise of other men, for he hath it in himself.

Wherefore he that truly and faithfully executeth his office, careth not what the world speak of him: he careth not whether the world praise or dispraise him, but he hath praise in himself, which is the testimony of his conscience, and praise or glory in God. He may therefore say with Paul: this is our rejoicing, this is our praise and glory, even the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and sincerity before God, and not in fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world. This glory is uncorrupt and stedfast; for it dependeth not on other men's judgments, but of our own conscience, which beareth us witness that we have taught the word purely, ministered the sacraments rightly, and have done all things well, and therefore it cannot be defaced or taken from us.

The other glory which these proud spirits do seek, is uncertain and most perilous, for that they have it not themselves, but it consisteth in the mouth and opinion of the people: therefore can they not have the testimony of their own conscience, that they have done all things with simplicity and sincerity, for the advancing of the glory of God only, and the salvation of souls. For this is it which they seek, that they may be counted famous through the work and labour of their preaching, and be praised of men. They have therefore a glory, a trust, and a testimony: but before men, not in themselves, nor before God. The godly do not desire glory after this manner. If Paul had had his praise before men, and not in himself, he should have been compelled to despair when he saw many cities, countries, and all Asia, fall from him; when he saw so many offences and slanders, and so many heresies to follow his preaching. Christ, when he was

alone, that is, when he was not only sought for by the Jews to be put to death, but also was forsaken of his disciples, was not yet alone, but the father was with him, for he had glory and rejoicing in himself. (John xvi. 32.)

So at this day, if our trust, our glory, and rejoicing, did depend upon the judgment and favour of men, we should die with very anguish and sorrow of heart. For so far off is it that the papists, seclaries, and the whole world do judge us worthy of any reverence or praise, that they hate and persecute us most bitterly; yea they would gladly overthrow our ministry, and root out our doctrine for ever. We have therefore nothing before men but reproach: but we rejoice and we glory in the lord, and therefore we attend upon our office cheerfully and faithfully, which we know is acceptable to him. Thus doing, we care not whether our work do please or displease the devil, whether the world love us or hate us. For we, knowing our work to be well done, and having a good conscience before God, go forward by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, &c. (2 Cor. vi. 8.) This, saith Paul, is to have rejoicing or glory in thyself.

And this admonition is very necessary against that execrable vice of vain-glory. The gospel is a doctrine, which both of itself, and also by the malice of the devil, bringeth with it the cross and persecution. Therefore Paul is wont to call it the word of the cross and of offence. It hath not always stedfast and constant disciples. Many there be that to-day make profession thereof and embrace it, which to-morrow, being offended with the cross, will fall from it and deny it. They therefore that teach the gospel, to the end that they may obtain the favour and praise of men, must needs perish, and their glory be turned to shame, when the people cease to reverence and magnify them. Wherefore let all pastors and ministers of the word learn to have glory and rejoicing in themselves, and not in the mouth of other men. If there be any that praise them, as the godly are wont to do (by evil report and good report, saith Paul) yet let them receive this glory but as a shadow of true glory; and let them think the substance of glory to be indeed the testimony of their own conscience. He that doth so, proveth his work, that is, he regardeth not his own glory, but his only care is to do his office faithfully, that is to say, to teach the gospel purely, and to shew the true use of the sacraments.

When he thus proveth his own work, he hath glory and rejoicing in himself, which no man can take from him; for he hath it surely planted and grounded in his own heart, and not in other men's mouths, whom Satan can very easily turn away, and can make that mouth and tongue now full of cursing, which a little before was full of blessing.

Therefore, saith Paul, if ye be desirous of vain-glory, seek it where it should be sought, not in the mouth of other men, but in your own heart; which ye then do, when ye execute your office truly and faithfully. So shall it come to pass, that, besides the glory which ye have in yourselves, ye shall have praise and commendation also before men. But if ye glory in other men, and not in yourselves, that shame and confusion which ye have in yourselves, shall not be without reproach and confusion also before men. This we have seen in certain fantastical spirits in these our days, which proved not their work, that is, they did not seek only to preach the gospel purely and simply, but misused it to gain praise among men, contrary to the second commandment. Therefore, after their inward confusion, there followed also an outward confusion and shame among men, according to that saying, The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. (Exod. xx. 9.) And again, They which despise me, shall be despised. (1 Sam. i. 30).

Contrariwise, if we seek first the glory of God, by the ministry of the word, then surely our glory will follow, according to that saying, Him that honoureth me I will glorify. To conclude, Let every man prove his work; that is, let him do his endeavour that his ministry may be found faithful: for this, above all things, is required in the ministers of the word. (1 Cor. iv.) As if he should say, Let every man endeavour purely and faithfully to teach the word, and let him have an eye to nothing else but the glory of God and the salvation of souls; then shall his work be faithful and sound; then shall he have glory and rejoicing in his own conscience, so that he may boldly say, This my doctrine and ministry pleaseth God. And this is indeed an excellent glory.

This sentence may also be well applied to those works which are done of the faithful in every state of life. As if a magistrate, an housholder, a servant, a schoolmaster, a scholar, abide in his vocation, and do his duty therein.

faithfully, not troubling himself with those works which pertain not to his vocation, he may glory and rejoice in himself; for he may say, I have done the works of my vocation appointed unto me by God, with such faithfulness and diligence as I was able. Therefore I know that this work, being done in faith and obedience to God, pleaseth God. If other speak evil of it, I pass little thereof. For there be always some which despise and slander the doctrine and life of the godly: but God hath threatened to destroy all lying lips and slanderous tongues. Therefore whilst such men do greedily seek after vain-glory, and with lies and slanders go about to deface the godly, it happeneth to them as Paul saith, Whose glory is their shame, (Phil. iii. 19.) And in another place, Their foolishness shall be known to all men. (2 Tim. iii. 9.) By whom? Even by God the righteous judge, who as he will utter their false accusations and slanders, so will he reveal the righteousness of the godly like the noon-day, as it is said, Psalm xxxvii.

This clause, in himself (to touch this also by the way) must so be understood that God be not excluded: that is, that every man may know, in what godly state of life soever he be, that his work is a divine work; for it is the work of his vocation having the commandment of God.

Verse 5. *For every man shall bear his own burden.*

This is, as it were, the reason or confirmation of the former sentence, lest any man should lean to other men's judgments in praising and commending of him. As if he said: it is extreme madness for thee to seek glory in another, and not in thyself: for in the agony of death, and the last judgment, it shall nothing profit thee, that other men have praised thee; for other men shall not bear thy burden, but thou shalt stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shalt bear thy burden alone. There thy praisers shall nothing help thee. For when we die, these praises shall cease. And in that day, when the lord shall judge the secrets of all hearts, the witness of thine own conscience shall stand either with thee or against thee. (Rom. ii. 15) Against thee, if thou glory in other men; with thee, if thou have it in thyself, that is to say, if thy conscience bear thee witness that thou hast done thy duty in the ministry of the word, or otherwise according to thy calling, sincerely and faithfully, having respect to the glory

of God only, and the salvation of souls. And these words, Every man shall bear his own judgment, are very vehement, and ought so to terrify us, that we should not be desirous of vain-glory.

And this moreover is to be noted, that we are not here in the matter of justification, where nothing availeth but mere grace and forgiveness of sins, which is received by faith alone; where all our works also, yea, even our best works, and such as are done according to God's calling, have need of forgiveness of sins, but this is another case. He treateth not here of the remission of sins, but compareth true works and hypocritical works together. These things therefore ought thus to be taken, that although the work of ministry of a godly pastor is not so perfect, but that he hath need of forgiveness of sins, yet in itself it is good and perfect, in comparison of the ministry of the vain-glorious man.

So our ministry is good and sound, because we seek thereby the glory of God and the salvation of souls. But the ministry of the fantastical heads is not so, for they seek their own praise. Albeit therefore that no works can quiet the conscience before God; yet it is necessary that we should persuade ourselves that we have done our work uprightly, truly, and according to God's calling, that is, that we have not corrupted the word of God, but have taught it purely and faithfully. This testimony of conscience we have need of, that we have done our duty uprightly, in our function and calling, and led our life accordingly. So far ought we then to glory as touching our works, as we know them to be commanded of God, and that they please him. For every one in the last judgment shall bear his own burden, and therefore other men's praises shall there nothing help or profit him.

Hitherto he hath spoken against that most pestilent vice of vain-glory; for the suppressing whereof, no man is so strong, but that he hath need of continual prayer. For what man, almost even among the godly, is not delighted with his own praises? Only the Holy Ghost can preserve us that we be not infected with this vice.

Verse 6. *Let him that is taught in the word, make him that teacheth him partaker of all his goods.*

Here he preacheth to the disciples or hearers of the word, commanding them to bestow all good things upon

those which have taught and instructed them in the word. I have sometimes marvelled why the apostles commanded the churches so diligently to nourish their teachers. For, in popery, I saw that all men gave abundantly to the building and maintaining of goodly temples, to the increasing of the revenues and livings of those which were appointed to their idolatrous service. Hereof it came that the estimation and riches of the bishops and the rest of the clergy did so increase, that every where they had in possession the best and most fruitful grounds. Therefore, thought I, that Paul had commanded this in vain, seeing that all manner of good things were not only abundantly given to the clergy, but also they overflowed in wealth and riches. Wherefore, I thought, that men ought rather to be exhorted to withhold their hands from giving, than encouraged to give any more: For I saw, that, by this excessive liberality of men, the covetousness of the clergy did increase. But now I know the cause why they had such abundance of all good things heretofore, and now the pastors and ministers of the word do want.

Before time, when nothing else was taught but errors and wicked doctrine, they had such plenty of all things, that of Peter's patrimony (which denied that he had either silver or gold) and of spiritual goods (as they called them) the pope was become an emperor, the cardinals and bishops were made kings and princes of the world. But now, since the gospel hath been preached and published, the professors thereof be as rich as sometime Christ and his apostles were. We find then by experience, how well this commandment of nourishing and maintaining the pastors and ministers of God's word is observed, which Paul here and in other places so diligently repeateth and beate[n] into the heads of his hearers. There is now no city which is known to us, that nourisheth and maintaineth her pastors and preachers: but they are all entertained with those goods which were given, not unto Christ, to whom no man giveth any thing (for when he was born he was laid in a manger instead of a bed, because there was no room for him in the inn. (Luke ii. 7.) Afterwards, being conversant among men, he had not whereon to lay his head. (Matt. viii. 20.) And briefly, being spoiled of his garments, and hanging naked upon the cross between two thieves, he died most miserably, (Matt. xxvii. 38.) but to the pope for the maintenance of

his abominations, and because he, oppressing the gospel, taught the doctrines and traditions of men, and set up idolatry.

And as oft as I read the exhortations of Paul, whereby he persuadeth the churches, that they should either nourish their pastors, or give somewhat to the relief of the poor saints in Jewry: I do greatly marvel, and am ashamed that so great an apostle should be constrained to use so many words for the obtaining of this benefit of the congregations. Writing to the Corinthians, he treateth of this matter in two whole chapters. (2 Cor. viii. and ix.) I would be loth to defame Wyttenberg, which indeed is nothing to Corinth, as he defamed the Corinthians in begging so carefully for the relief and succour of the poor. But this is the lot of the gospel when it is preached, that not only no man is willing to give any thing for the finding of ministers and maintaining of scholars, but men begin to spoil, to rob, and to steal, and with diverse crafty means one to beguile another. To be brief, men seem suddenly to grow out of kind, and to be transformed into cruel beasts. Contrariwise, when the doctrine of devils was preached, then men were prodigal, and offered all things willingly to those that deceived them. (1 Tim. iv. 2.) The prophets do reprove the same sin in the Jews, which were loth to give any thing to the godly priests and Levites, but gave all things plentifully to the wicked.

Now therefore we begin to understand how necessary this commandment of Paul is as touching the maintenance of the ministers of the church. For Satan can abide nothing less than the light of the gospel. Therefore when he seeth that it beginneth to shine, then doth he rage, and goeth about with ail main and might to quench it. And this he attempted two manner of ways. First, by lying spirits and force of tyrants; and then by poverty and famine. But because he could not hitherto oppress the gospel in this country (praised be God) by heretics and tyrants; therefore he attempteth to bring it to pass the other way, that is, by withdrawing the livings of the ministers of the word, to the end that they, being oppressed with poverty and necessity, should forsake the ministry, and so the miserable people being destitute of the word of God, should become in time as savage and wild beasts. And Satan helpeth forward this horrible enormity by ungodly magistrates in the cities, and also by noblemen and

gentlemen in the country, who take away the church goods, whereby the ministers of the gospel should live, and turn them to wicked uses. These goods, saith the prophet Micah (chap i. 7.), were gathered of the hire of an harlot, and therefore to an harlot's hire shall they return.

Moreover, Satan turneth men particularly also from the gospel by overmuch fulness. For when the gospel is diligently and daily preached, many being glutted therewith begin to loath it, and by little and little become negligent and untoward to all godly exercises. Again, there is no man that will now bring up his children in good learning, and much less in the study of the holy scripture, but they employ them wholly to gainful arts or occupations. All these are Satan's practices, to no other end but that he may oppress the gospel in this our country, without any violence of tyrants, or subtle devices of heretics.

It is not without cause, therefore, that Paul warneth the hearers of the gospel to make their pastors and teachers partakers with them in all good things. If we (saith he to the Corinthians) have sown to you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we reap your worldly things? (1 Cor. ix. 11.) The hearers, therefore, ought to minister carnal things to them of whom they have received spiritual things. But both husbandmen, citizens, and gentlemen do at this day abuse our doctrine, that under the colour thereof they may enrich themselves. Heretofore, when the pope reigned, there was no man which paid not somewhat yearly to the priests for masses, d riges, trentals, and such trash. The begging friars had also their part. The merchandizes of Rome likewise, and daily offerings, carried away somewhat. From these and from an infinite number of such exactions, our countrymen are now delivered by the gospel. But so far off is it that they are thankful unto God for this liberty, that of prodigal givers they are now become stark thieves and robbers, and will not bestow one farthing upon the gospel or the ministers thereof, nor give any thing for the relief and succour of the poor saints: which is a certain token that they have lost both the word and faith, and that they have no spiritual goodness in them. For it is impossible that such as are godly indeed should suffer their pastors to live in necessity and penury. But forasmuch as they laugh

and rejoice when their pastors suffer any adversity, and withhold their living, or give it not with such faithfulness as they ought, it is a plain token that they are worse than the heathen.

But they will feel ere it be long what calamities will follow this unthankfulness; for they shall lose both temporal and spiritual things. For this sin must needs be grievously punished. And certainly I think that the churches in Galatia, Corinth, and other places were so troubled by the false apostles for no other cause, but for that they little regarded their true pastors and preachers. For it is good reason that he which refuseth to give a penny to God, who offereth unto him all good things and life everlasting, should give a piece of gold to the devil, the author of all evils and death everlasting. Whoso will not serve God in a little, and that to his own inestimable benefit, let him serve the devil in much to his extreme and utter confusion. Now, therefore, since the light of the gospel beginneth to shine, we see what the devil is, and what the world is.

In that he saith, in all his goods, it is not so to be taken, that all men are bound to give all that they have to their ministers, but that they should maintain them liberally, and give them that whereby they may be well able to live.

Verse 7. *Be not deceived, for God is not mocked.*

The apostle prosecuteth this place of the nourishing and maintaining of ministers so earnestly, that to his former reprehension and exhortation he addeth now also a threatening, saying, God is not mocked. And here he toucheth to the quick the perverseness of our countrymen, which proudly despise our ministry. For they think it to be but a sport and a game: and therefore they go about (especially the gentlemen) to make their pastors subject unto them like servants and slaves. And if we had not so godly a prince, and one that so loveth the truth, they had ere this time driven us out of the country. When the pastors ask their duty, or complain that they suffer penury, they cry out, The priests be covetous, they would have plenty; no man is able to satisfy their unsatiable covetousness: if they were true gospellers, they should have nothing of their own, but as poor men

ought to follow poor Christ, and so suffer all adversities, &c.

Paul horribly threateneth here such tyrants, and such mockers of God, who so carelessly and proudly do scorn the miserable preachers, and yet will seem to be gospelers, and not to be mockers of God, but to worship him very devoutly. Be not deceived, saith he, God is not mocked; that is to say, he doth not suffer himself to be mocked in his ministers. For he saith, He that despiseth you, despiseth me (Luke x. 16.). Also he saith unto Samuel, They have not cast thee away, but me (1 Sam. vii. 8.). Therefore, O ye mockers, although God defer his punishment for a season, yet when he seeth time he will find you out, and will punish this contempt of his word and bitter hatred which ye bear against his ministers. Therefore ye deceive not God, but yourselves, and ye shall not laugh at God, but he will laugh at you (Psalm ii.). But our proud gentlemen, citizens, and common people are nothing at all moved with their dreadful threatening. Nevertheless they shall feel when death approacheth, whether they have mocked themselves or us; yea rather not us, but God himself, as Paul saith here. In the mean time, because they proudly despise our admonitions with an intolerable pride, we speak these things to our comfort, to the end we may know that it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong; for patience is ever innocent and harmless (Psalm xxxiv. 10.). Moreover, God will not suffer his ministers to starve for hunger, but even when the rich men suffer scarcity and hunger, he will feed them, and in the days of famine they shall have enough (Psalm xxxvii. 19.).

Verse 7. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap.

All these things tend to this purpose, that ministers should be nourished and maintained. For my part, I do not gladly interpret such sentences; for they seem to commend us, and so they do indeed. Moreover, if a man stand much in repeating such things to his hearers, it hath some shew of covetousness. Notwithstanding men must be admonished hereof, that they may know that they ought to yield unto their pastors both reverence and a necessary living. Our Saviour Christ teacheth the same thing in the tenth of Luke. Eating and drinking such

things as they have, for the labourer is worthy of his reward. And Paul saith in another place: Do ye not know, that they which sacrifice in the temple, live of the sacrifices; and that they which serve at the altar, are partakers of the altar? even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel (1 Cor ix. 13, 14).

It is good that we also which are in the ministry should know these things, lest for our labour we might with evil conscience receive the stipend which is given unto us of the pope's goods. And although such goods were heaped together by mere fraud and deceit; yet notwithstanding God spoiled the Egyptians (Exod. iii. 22.), that is to say, the papists of their goods, turneth them here amongst us, to a good and holy use; not when noblemen and gentlemen spoil them and abuse them, but when they which set forth God's glory, and bring up youth virtuously are maintained therewith. Let us know then that we may with good conscience (since God hath ordained and commanded that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel) use those things that are given us of the church-goods for the necessary sustentation of our life, to the end we may attend upon our office the better. Let no man, therefore, make any scruple hereof, as though it were not lawful for him to use such goods.

Verse 8. For he that soweth in the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth in the spirit, shall of the spirit reap everlasting life.

He addeth a similitude and an allegory. And this general sentence of sowing he applieth to the particular matter of nourishing and maintaining the ministers of the word, saying, He that soweth in the spirit, that is to say, he that cherisheth the teachers of God's word doth a spiritual work, and shall reap everlasting life. Here riseth a question, whether we deserve eternal life by good works? for so Paul seemeth to avouch in this place. As touching such sentences which speak of works and the reward of them, we have treated very largely before in the fifth chapter. And very necessary it is, after the example of Paul, to exhort the faithful to good works, that is to say, to exercise their faith by good works. For if they follow not faith, it is a manifest token that their faith is

no true faith. Therefore the apostle saith, He that soweth in the flesh (some understand it in his own flesh), that is to say, he that giveth nothing to the ministers of God's word, but only feedeth and careth for himself (which is the counsel of the flesh), that man shall of the flesh reap corruption, not only in this present life, but also in the life to come. For the goods of the wicked shall waste away, and they themselves also at length shall shamefully perish. The apostle would fain stir up his hearers to be liberal and beneficial towards their pastors and preachers. But what a misery is it, that the perverseness and ingratitude of men should be so great, that the churches should need this admonition?

The Encratites abused this place, for the confirmation of their wicked opinion against marriage, expounding it after this manner: He that soweth in the flesh shall reap corruption, that is to say, he that marrieth a wife shall be damned; *ergo*, a wife is a damnable thing, and marriage is evil, forasmuch as there is in it a sowing in the flesh. These beasts were so destitute of all judgment, that they perceived not whereabouts the apostle went. I speak this to the end ye may see how easily the devil, by his ministers, can turn away the hearts of the simple from the truth. Germany shall shortly have an infinite number of such beasts, yea and already hath very many; for, on the one side, it persecuteth and killeth the godly ministers; and on the other side it neglecteth and despiseth them, and suffereth them to live in great penury. Let us arm ourselves against these and such like errors, and let us learn to know the true meaning of the scriptures. For Paul speaketh not here of matrimony, but of nourishing the ministers of the church, which every man, that is endued but with the common judgment of reason, may perceive. And although this nourishment is but a corporal thing, yet notwithstanding he calleth it a sowing in the spirit. Contrariwise, when men greedily scrape together what they can, and seek only their own gain, he calleth it a sowing in the flesh. He pronounceth those which sow in the spirit to be blessed both in this life and the life to come; and the other, which sow in the flesh, to be both accursed in this life and in the life to come.

Verse 9. *And let us not be weary in doing good, for in due time we shall reap without weariness.*

The apostle, intending to close up his epistle, passeth from the particular to the general, and exhorteth generally to all good works. As if he should say: Let us be liberal and bountiful, not only towards the ministers of the word, but also towards all other men, and that without weariness. For it is an easy matter for a man to do good once or twice; but to continue, and not to be discouraged through the ingratitude and perverseness of those to whom he hath done good, that is very hard. Therefore he doth not only exhort us to do good, but also not to be weary in doing good. And to persuade us the more easily thereunto, he addeth, For in due time we shall reap without weariness. As if he said: Wait and look for the perpetual harvest that is to come, and then shall no ingratitude or perverse dealing of men be able to pluck you away from well doing; for in the harvest-time ye shall receive most plentiful increase and fruit of your seed. Thus, with most sweet words, he exhorteth the faithful to the doing of good works.

Verse 10. *Therefore while we have time, let us do good unto all men, but specially to those that be of the household of faith.*

This is the knitting-up of his exhortation for the liberal maintaining and nourishing of the ministers of the word, and giving of alms to all such as have need. As if he had said: Let us do good while it is day; for when night cometh, we can no longer work (John ix. 4.). Indeed men work many things when the light of truth is taken away, but all in vain; for they walk in darkness, and wot not whither they go, and therefore all their life, works, sufferings, and death are in vain (John xii. 35.). And by these words he toucheth the Galatians. As if he should say: Except ye continue in the sound doctrine which ye have received of me, your working of much good, your suffering of many troubles, and such other things profit you nothing; as he said before in the third chapter, Have ye suffered so many things in vain? And by a new kind of speech he termeth those the household

of faith, which are joined with us in the fellowship of faith, among whom the ministers of the word are the chiefest, and then all the rest of the faithful.

Verse 11. *Behold what a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.*

He closeth up his epistle with an exhortation to the faithful, and with a sharp rebuke or invective against the false apostles—Behold (saith he) what a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand? This he saith to move them, and to shew his motherly affection towards them. As if he should say: I never wrote so long an epistle with mine own hand to any other church, as I have done unto you. For as for his other epistles, as he spake, other wrote them, and afterwards he subscribed his salutation and name with his own hand, as it is to be seen in the end of his epistles. And in these words (as I suppose) he hath respect to the length of the epistle. Other some take it otherwise.

Verse 12. *As many as desire to please in the flesh, compel you to be circumcised, only because they would not suffer the persecution of the cross of Christ.*

Before he cursed the false apostles. Now, as it were, repeating the same thing again, but with other words, he accuseth them very sharply, to the end he may fear and turn away the Galatians from their doctrine, notwithstanding the great authority which they seemed to have. The teachers which ye have (saith he) are such as first regard not the glory of Christ, and the salvation of your souls, but only seek their own glory. Secondly, they fly the cross. Thirdly, they understand not those things which they teach.

These false teachers, being accused of the apostles for three such execrable enormities, were worthy to be avoided of all men. But yet all the Galatians obeyed not this warning of Paul. And Paul doth the false apostles no wrong when he so vehemently inveigheth against them; but he justly condemneth them by his apostolic authority. In like manner, when we call the pope antichrist, his bishops and his shavelings a cursed generation, we slander them not, but by God's authority

we judge them to be accursed, according to that which is said in the first chapter—If we, or an angel from heaven, preach otherwise than we have preached unto you, accursed be he: for they hate, persecute, and overthrow the doctrine of Christ.

Your teachers (saith he) are vain heads, and not regarding the glory of Christ and your salvation, they seek only their own glory. Again, because they are afraid of the cross, they preach circumcision and the righteousness of the flesh, lest they should provoke the Jews to hate and persecute them. Wherefore, although ye hear them never so gladly and never so long, yet shall ye hear but such as make their belly their god, seek their own glory, and shun the cross. And here is to be noted a certain vehemency in the word compel. For circumcision is nothing of itself: but to be compelled to circumcision, and when a man hath received it, to put righteousness and holiness therein; and if it be not received to make it a sin: that is an injury unto Christ. Of this matter I have spoken largely enough heretofore.

Verse 13. For they themselves that are circumcised do not keep the law; but they would have you circumcised, that they might glory in your flesh.

Is not Paul here worthy to be called an heretic? For he saith, that not only the false apostles, but all the nation of the Jews which were circumcised, keep not the law, but rather that they which were circumcised, in fulfilling the law, fulfil it not. This is against Moses (Gen. xvii. 10, 14.), who saith, that to be circumcised is to keep the law; and not to be circumcised is to make the covenant void (Gen. xvii. 12.). And the Jews were circumcised for none other cause but to keep the law, which commanded that every male child should be circumcised the eighth day. Hereof we have before intreated at large, and therefore we need not now to repeat the same again. Now these things serve to the condemning of the false apostles, that the Galatians may be feared from hearing of them. As if he should say: Behold I set before your eyes what manner of teachers you have (Phil. ii. 21.). First, they are vain-glorious men, which seek nothing but their own profit, and care for nothing but their own belly. Secondly, they fly the cross; and finally, they teach no

truth or certainty, but all their sayings and doings are counterfeit and full of hypocrisy. Wherefore, although they keep the law outwardly, yet in keeping it, they keep it not. For without the Holy Ghost the law cannot be kept. But the Holy Ghost cannot be received without Christ; and where the Holy Ghost dwelleth not, there dwelleth an unclean spirit, that is to say, despising God, and seeking his own gain and glory. Therefore all that he doth, as touching the law, is mere hypocrisy and double sin. For an unclean heart doth not fulfil the law, but only maketh an outward shew thereof, and so is it more confirmed in his wickedness and hypocrisy.

And this sentence is diligently to be marked, that they which are circumcised keep not the law, that is to say, that they which are circumcised are not circumcised. It may also be applied unto other works. He that worketh, prayeth, or suffereth without Christ, worketh, prayeth, and suffereth in vain; for all that is not of faith is sin (Rom. xiv. 23.). It profiteth a man therefore nothing at all to be outwardly circumcised, to fast, to pray, or to do any other work, if he be within a despiser of grace, of forgiveness of sins, of faith, of Christ, &c. and be puffed up with the opinion and presumption of his own righteousness, which are horrible sins against the first table: and afterward there follow also other sins against the second table, as disobedience, whoredom, furiousness, wrath, hatred, and such other. Therefore he saith very well, that they which be circumcised keep not the law, but only pretend that they keep it. But this counterfeiting, or rather hypocrisy, is double wickedness afore God.

What mean the false apostles, when they would have you to be circumcised? Not that ye might become righteous, although they so bear you in hand, but that they may glory in your flesh. Now, who would not detest this most pestilent vice of ambition and desire of glory, which is sought with so great peril of men's souls? There are (saith he) deceitful, shameless, and vain spirits, which serve their own belly, and hate the cross. Again (which is worst of all), they compel you to be circumcised according to the law, that they may thereby abuse your flesh to their own glory, and in the mean season they bring your souls in danger of everlasting destruction. For what gain ye else before God but dam-

nation? and what else before men, but that the false apostles may glory that they are your teachers, and ye their disciples? and yet they teach you that which they themselves do not. Thus doth he sharply reprove the false apostles.

These words, That they may glory in your flesh, are very effectual. As if he should say: They have not the word of the spirit; therefore it is impossible for you to receive the spirit by their preaching. They do but only exercise your flesh, making you fleshly justiciaries or justifiers of yourselves. Outwardly they observe days, times, sacrifices, and such other things according to the law, which are altogether carnal, whereby ye reap nothing else but unprofitable labour and damnation. And on the other side, this they gain thereby, that they boast they are your teachers, and have called you back from the doctrine of Paul the heretic, unto their mother the synagogue. So at this day the Papists brag, that they call back those to the bosom of their mother the holy church, whom they deceive and seduce. Contrariwise, we glory not in your flesh, but glory as touching your spirit, because ye have received the spirit by our preaching (Gal. iii. 2.).

Verse 14. But God forbid that I should glory but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle closeth up the matter with an indignation, and with great vehemency of spirit he casteth out these words: But God forbid, &c. As if he should say: This carnal glory and ambition of the false apostles is so dangerous a poison, that I wish it were buried in hell, for it is the cause of the destruction of many. But let them glory in the flesh that list, and let them perish with their cursed glory. As for me, I desire no other glory, but that whereby I glory and rejoyce in the cross of Christ. After the same manner speaketh he also: We glory in our afflictions (Rom. v.). Also in 2 Cor. xii. I will glory in mine afflictions. Here Paul sheweth what is the glory and rejoicing of the Christians, namely, to glory and to be proud in tribulation, reproaches, infirmities, &c.

The world judgeth of the Christians, not only that they are wretched and miserable men, but also most cruelly, and yet, as it thinketh, with a true zeal hateth, persecuteth, condemneth, and killeth them as most per-

icious plagues of the spiritual and worldly kingdom, that is to say, like heretics and rebels. But because they do not suffer these things for murder, theft, and such other wickedness, but for the love of Christ, whose benefit and glory they set forth, therefore they glory in tribulation and in the cross of Christ, and are glad with the apostles that they are counted worthy to suffer rebuke for the name of Christ. (Acts v. 41.) So must we glory at this day, when the Pope and the whole world most cruelly persecute us, condemn us, and kill us, because we suffer these things, not for our evil deeds, as thieves, murderers, &c. but for Christ's sake, our lord and saviour, whose gospel we truly preach.

Now our glory is increased and confirmed principally by these two things: first, because we are certain that our doctrine is sound and perfect; secondly, because our cross and suffering is the suffering of Christ. Therefore when the world persecuteth and killeth us, we have no cause to complain or lament, but we ought rather to rejoice and be glad. Indeed the world judgeth us to be unhappy and accursed: but on the other side, Christ, who is greater than the world, and for whom we suffer, pronounceth us to be blessed and willeth us to rejoice. Blessed are ye (saith he) when men revile you and persecute you, and falsely say all manner of evil against you for my sake. Rejoice and be glad (Matt. v. 11, 12.) Our glory then is another manner of glory than the glory of the world is, which rejoiceth not in tribulation, reproach, persecution, and death, &c. but glorieth altogether in power, in riches, peace, honour, wisdom, and his own righteousness. But mourning and confusion is the end of this glory.

Moreover, the cross of Christ doth not signify that piece of wood which Christ did bear upon his shoulders, and to the which he was afterwards nailed, but generally it signifieth all the afflictions of the faithful, whose sufferings are Christ's sufferings. (2 Cor. i.) The sufferings of Christ abound in us. Again, Now rejoice I in my sufferings for you, and fulfil the rest of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church, &c. (Col. i. 24.) The cross of Christ therefore generally signifieth all the afflictions of the church which it suffereth for Christ; which he himself witnesseth when he saith, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? (Acts ix. 4.)

Saul did no violence to Christ, but to his church. But he that toucheth it, toucheth the apple of his eye. (Zach. ii. 8.) There is a more lively feeling in the head than in the other members of the body. And this we know by experience; for the little toe, or the least part of man's body, being hurt, the head forthwith sheweth itself, by the countenance, to feel the grief thereof. So Christ, our head, maketh all our afflictions his own, and suffereth also when we suffer, which are his body.

It is profitable for us to know these things, lest we should be swallowed up with sorrow, or fall to despair, when we see that our adversaries do cruelly persecute, excommunicate, and kill us. But let us think with ourselves, after the example of Paul, that we must glory in the cross which we bear, not for our own sins, but for Christ's sake. If we consider only in ourselves the sufferings which we endure, they are not only grievous but intolerable: but when we may say, Thy sufferings, O Christ, abound in us; (2 Cor. i. 5.) or, as it is said in the 44th Psalm: For thy sake we are killed all the day, then these sufferings are not only easy, but also sweet, according to that saying, My burden is easy and my yoke is sweet. (Matt. xi. 30.)

Now, it is well known that we, at this day, do suffer the hatred and persecution of our adversaries for none other cause, but for that we preach Christ faithfully and purely. If we would deny him, and approve their pernicious errors and wicked religion, they would not only cease to hate and persecute us, but would also offer unto us honour, riches, and many goodly things. Because therefore we suffer these things for Christ's sake, we may truly rejoice and glory with Paul in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is to say, not in riches, in power, in the favour of men, &c. but in afflictions, weakness, sorrow, fightings in the body, terrors in the spirit, persecutions, and all other evils, (2 Cor. vii. 5.) Wherefore we trust it will shortly come to pass, that Christ will say the same to us that David said to Abiathar the priest, I am the cause of all your deaths. (1 Sam. xxii. 22.) Again, He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye. (Zach. ii. 8.) As if he had said: He that hurteth you, hurteth me. For if ye did not preach my word and confess me, ye should not suffer these things. So saith he also in John, If ye were of the world, the world would

love his own : but because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. (John xv. 19.) But these things are treated of afore.

Verse 14. *By whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.*

This is Paul's manner of speaking : The world is crucified to me, that is, I judge the world to be damned. And I am crucified to the world, that is, the world again judgeth me to be damned. Thus we crucify and condemn one another. I abhor all the doctrine, righteousness, and works of the world, as the poison of the devil. The world again detesteth my doctrine and deeds, and judgeth me to be seditious, a pernicious, a pestilent fellow, and an heretic. So at this day the world is crucified to us, and we unto the world. We curse and condemn all man's traditions concerning mass, orders, vows, will-worshippings, works, and all the abominations of the Pope and other heretics, as the dirt of the devil. They again do persecute and kill us, as destroyers of religion, and troublers of the public peace.

The monks dreamed that the world was crucified to them, when they entered into their monasteries : but by this means Christ is crucified and not the world, yea the world is delivered from crucifying, and is the more quickened by that opinion of holiness and trust which they had in their own righteousness that entered into religion. Most foolishly and wickedly therefore was this sentence of the apostle wrested to the entering into monasteries. He speaketh here of an high matter and of great importance, that is to say, that every faithful man judgeth that to be the wisdom, righteousness, and power of God, which the world condemneth as the greatest folly, wickedness, and weakness. And contrariwise, that which the world judgeth to be the highest religion and service of God, the faithful do know to be nothing else but execrable and horrible blasphemy against God. So the godly condemn the world, and again, the world condemneth the godly. But the godly have the right judgment on their side : for the spiritual man judgeth all things. (1 Cor. ii. 13.)

Wherefore the judgment of the world, touching religion and righteousness before God, is contrary to the judgment of the godly, as God and the devil are contrary

the one to the other. For as God is crucified to the devil, and the devil to God, that is to say, as God condemneth the doctrine and works of the devil, for the son of God appeared, as John saith, to destroy the works of the devil: (1 John iii. 8.) and contrariwise, the devil condemneth and overthroweth the word, and the works of God, for he is a murderer and the father of lies: so the world condemneth the doctrine and life of the godly, calling them most pernicious heretics and troublers of the public peace. And again, the faithful call the world the son of the devil, which rightly followeth his father's steps, that is to say, which is as great a murderer and liar as his father is. This is Paul's meaning when he saith, Whereby the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world. Now the world doth not only signify in the scriptures ungodly and wicked men, but the very best, the wisest and holiest men that are of the world.

And here, by the way, he covertly toucheth the false apostles. As if he should say: I utterly hate and detest all glory which is without the cross of Christ, as a cursed thing: for the world, with all the glory thereof, is crucified to me, and I to the world. Wherefore accursed be all they which glory in their flesh, and not in the cross of Christ. Paul therefore witnesseth by these words, that he hateth the world with a perfect hatred of the Holy Ghost; and again, the world hateth him with a perfect hatred of a wicked spirit. As if he should say, It is impossible that there should be any agreement between me and the world. What shall I then do? Shall I give place and teach those things which please the world? No: but with a stout courage I will set myself against it, and will as well despise and crucify it, as it despiseth and crucifieth me.

To conclude, Paul here teacheth how we should fight against Satan (which not only tormenteth our bodies with sundry afflictions, but also woundeth our hearts continually with his fiery darts, that, by this continuance, when he can no otherwise prevail, he may overthrow our faith, and bring us from the truth and from Christ) namely, that like as we see Paul himself to have stoutly despised the world, so we also should despise the devil the prince thereof, with all his force, deceits, and hellish furies, and so trusting to the aid and help of Christ, should triumph against him after this manner; O Satan, the more thou hurtest and goest about to hurt me, the more proud and stout I am against thee, and laugh thee to scorn. The

more thou terrifiest me, and seekest to bring me to desperation, so much the more confidence and boldness I take, and glory in the midst of thy furies and malice; not by mine own power, but by the power of my Lord and Saviour Christ, whose strength is made perfect in my weakness. Therefore when I am weak, then am I strong (2 Cor. xii. 9.). On the contrary, when he seeth his threatenings and terrors to be feared, he rejoiceth, and then he terrifieth more and more such as are terrified already.

Verse 15. For in Christ Jesu, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.

This is a wonderful kind of speech which Paul here useth, when he saith, Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision prevaileth any thing. It may seem that he should rather have said: Either circumcision or uncircumcision availeth somewhat, seeing these are two contrary things. But now he denieth that either the one or the other do any thing avail. As if he should have said: Ye must mount up higher; for circumcision and uncircumcision are things of no such importance, that they are able to obtain righteousness before God. True it is, that they are contrary the one to the other: but this is nothing as touching Christian righteousness, which is not earthly, but heavenly, and therefore it consisteth not in corporal things. Therefore, whether thou be circumcised or uncircumcised, it is all one thing; for in Christ Jesu neither the one nor the other availeth any thing at all.

The Jews were greatly offended when they heard that circumcision availed nothing. They easily granted that uncircumcision availed nothing; but they could not abide to hear that so much should be said of circumcision, for they fought even unto blood for the defence of the law and circumcision. The papists also at this day do vehemently contend for the maintenance of their traditions as touching the eating of flesh, single life, holy days, and such other: and they excommunicate and curse us, which teach that in Christ Jesu these things do nothing avail. But Paul saith, that we must have another thing, which is much more excellent and precious, whereby we may obtain righteousness before God. In Christ Jesu, saith he, neither circumcision nor uncir-

cumcision, neither single life nor marriage, neither meat nor fasting, do any whit avail. Meat maketh us not acceptable before God. We are neither the better by abstaining, or the worse by eating. All these things, yea the whole world, with all the laws and righteousness thereof, avail nothing to justification.

Reason and the wisdom of the flesh doth not understand this; for it perceiveth not those things which are of the spirit of God (1 Cor. ii. 14.). Therefore it will needs have righteousness to stand in outward things. But we are taught out of the word of God, that there is nothing under the sun which availeth unto righteousness before God, but Christ only, or, as Paul saith here, a new creature. Politic laws, men's traditions, ceremonies of the church, yea and the law of Moses, are such things as are without Christ; therefore they avail not unto righteousness before God. We may use them as things both good and necessary, but in their place and time. But if we talk of the matter of justification, they avail nothing, but hurt very much.

And by these two things circumcision and uncircumcision, Paul rejecteth all other things whatsoever, and denieth that they avail any thing in Christ Jesu, that is, in the cause of faith and salvation. For he taketh here a part of the whole, that is, by uncircumcision he understandeth all the Gentiles, by circumcision all the Jews, with all their force and all their glory. As if he said: Whatsoever the Gentiles can do, with all their wisdom, righteousness, laws, power, kingdoms, empires, it availeth nothing in Christ Jesus: Also, whatsoever the Jews are able to do with their Moses, their law, their circumcision, their worshippings, their temple, their kingdom, and priesthood, it nothing availeth. Wherefore in Christ Jesu, or in the matter of justification, we must not dispute of the laws, either of the Gentiles or of the Jews, but we must simply pronounce that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing.

Are the laws then of no effect? Not so: they be good and profitable, albeit in their place and time, that is, in corporal and civil things, which, without laws, cannot be guided. Moreover, we use also in the churches certain ceremonies and laws; not that the keeping of them availeth unto righteousness, but for good order, example, quietness, and concord, according to that saying, Let all

things be done comely and orderly (1 Cor. xiv.). But if laws be so set forth and urged, as though the keeping of them did justify a man, or the breaking thereof did condemn him, they ought to be taken away and to be abolished; for then Christ loseth his office and his glory, who only justifieth us, and giveth unto us the Holy Ghost. The apostle, therefore, by these words plainly affirmeth, that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but the new creature, &c. Now, since that neither the laws of the Gentiles nor of the Jews avail any thing, the Pope hath done most wickedly, in that he hath constrained men to keep his laws with the opinion of righteousness.

Now, a new creature, whereby the image of God is renewed, is not made by any colour or counterfeiting of good works (for in Christ Jesu neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision), but by Christ, by whom it is created after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. When works are done, they bring indeed a new shew and outward appearance wherewith the world and the flesh are delighted, but not a new creature; for the heart remaineth wicked as it was before, full of the contempt of God and infidelity. Therefore a new creature is the work of the Holy Ghost, which cleanseth our heart by faith (Acts xv. 9.), and worketh the fear of God, love, chastity, and other Christian virtues, and giveth power to bridle the flesh, and to reject the righteousness and wisdom of the world. Here is no colouring or new outward shew, but a thing done indeed. Here is created another sense and another judgment, that is to say, altogether spiritual, which abhorreth those things that before it greatly esteemed. The monkish life and order did so bewitch us in time past, that we thought there was no other way to salvation. But now we judge of it far otherwise. We are now ashamed of those things which we adored as most heavenly and holy, before we were regenerated into this new creature.

Wherefore, the changing of garments and other outward things is not a new creature (as the monks dream), but it is the renewing of the mind by the Holy Ghost; after the which followeth a change of the members and senses of the whole body. For when the heart hath con-

ceived a new light, a new judgment, and new motions through the gospel, it cometh to pass that the inward senses are also renewed: for the ears desire to hear the word of God, and not the traditions and dreams of men. The mouth and tongue do not vaunt of their own works, righteousness, and rules; but they set forth the mercy of God only offered unto us in Christ. These changes consist not in words, but are effectual, and bring a new spirit, a new will, new senses, and new operations of the flesh, so that the eyes, ears, mouth, and tongue, do not only see, hear, and speak otherwise than they did before, but the mind also approveth, loveth, and followeth another thing than it did before. For before, being blinded with popish errors and darkness, it imagined God to be a merchant, who would sell unto us his grace for our works and merits. But now, in the light of the gospel, it assureth us that we are counted righteous by faith only in Christ. Therefore it now rejecteth all will-works, and accomplisheth the works of charity and of our vocation commanded by God. It praiseth and magnifieth God; it rejoiceth and glorieth in the only trust and confidence of God's mercy through Jesus Christ. If it must suffer any trouble or affliction, it endureth the same cheerfully and gladly, although the flesh repine and grudge thereat. This Paul calleth a new creature.

Verse 16. *And to as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy.*

This he addeth as a conclusion. This is the only and true rule wherein we ought to walk, namely the new creature, which is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, but the new man created unto the image of God in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. iv. 24.) which inwardly is righteous in the spirit, and outwardly is holy and clean in the flesh. The monks have a righteousness and holiness, but it is hypocritical and wicked, because they hope not to be justified by only faith in Christ, but by the keeping of their rule. Moreover, although outwardly they counterfeit an holiness, and refrain their eyes, hands, tongue, and other members from evil, yet they have an unclean heart, full of filthy lust, envy, wrath, lechery, idolatry, contempt and hatred of God, blas-

phemy against Christ, &c.: for they are most spiteful and cruel enemies of the truth. Wherefore the rule and religion of the monks is most wicked and accursed of God.

But this rule, whereof Paul speaketh in this place, is blessed; by the which we live in the faith of Christ, and are made new creatures, that is to say, righteous and holy indeed by the Holy Ghost, without any colouring or counterfeiting. To them which walk after this rule belongeth peace, that is, the favour of God, forgiveness of sins, quietness of conscience, and mercy; that is to say, help in afflictions, and pardon of the remnants of sin which remain in our flesh. Yea, although they which walk after this rule be overtaken with any sin, yet, for that they are the children of grace and peace, mercy upholdeth them, so that their sin and fall shall not be laid to their charge.

Verse 16. And upon the Israel of God.

Here he toucheth the false apostles and Jews, which gloried of their fathers, bragged that they were the people of God, that they had the law, &c. As if he said, they are the Israel of God, which, with faithful Abraham, believe the promises of God offered already in Christ, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, and not they which are begotten of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, after the flesh. This matter is largely handled before in the third chapter.

Verse 17. For henceforth let no man put me to business.

He concluded his epistle with a certain indignation. As if he said: I have faithfully taught the gospel as I have received it by the revelation of Jesus Christ: whoso will not follow it, let him follow what he will, so that hereafter he trouble me no more. At a word, this is my censure, that Christ, which I have preached, is the only high-priest and saviour of the world. Therefore, either let the world walk according to this rule, of which I have spoken here and throughout all this epistle, or else let it perish for ever.

Verse 17. *For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.*

This is the true meaning of this place: the marks that be in my body do shew well enough whose servant I am. If I sought to please men, requiring circumcision and the keeping of the law as necessary to salvation, and rejoicing in your flesh as the false apostles do, I needed not to bear these marks in my body. But because I am the servant of Jesus Christ, and walk after a true rule, that is, I openly teach and confess, that no man can obtain the favour of God, righteousness and salvation, but by Christ alone, therefore it behoveth me to bear the badges of Christ my Lord, which be not marks of mine own procuring, but are laid upon me against my will by the world and the devil, for none other cause but for that I preach Jesus to be Christ.

The stripes and sufferings, therefore, which he did bear in his body, he calleth marks; as also the anguish and terror of spirit he calleth the fiery darts of the devil. of these sufferings he maketh mention every where in his epistles, as Luke also doth in the Acts. I think, saith he, that God hath set forth us, the last apostles, as men appointed to death; for we are made a gazing-stock unto the world, and to the angels, and to men (1 Cor. iv. 9.). Again: Unto this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place, and labour working with our own hands: we are reviled, we are persecuted, we are evil spoken of, we are made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things (1 Cor. iv. 11, 12, 13.). Also in another place: In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, by watchings, by fastings, &c. (2 Cor. vi. 4, 5, 6.) And again: In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prison more plenteously, in death oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one, I was thrice beaten with rods, I was once stoned, I suffered thrice shipwreck, night and day have I been in the deep sea. In journeyings I was often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own nation, in perils among the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, &c. (2 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25, 26.).

These be the true marks and imprinted signs, of which the apostle speaketh in this place; the which we also at this day, by the grace of God, bear in our bodies for Christ's cause. For the world persecuteth and killeth us, false brethren deadly hate us, Satan inwardly in our heart with his fiery darts terrifieth us, and for none other cause but for that we teach Christ to be our righteousness and life. These marks we chuse not of any devotion, neither do we gladly suffer them; but because the world and the devil do lay them upon us, for Christ's cause we are compelled to suffer them, and we rejoyce in spirit with Paul (which is always willing, glorieth, and rejoiceth), that we bear them in our body; for they are a seal and most sure testimony of true doctrine and faith. These things Paul spake (as I shewed afore) with a certain displeasure and indignation.

Verse 18. *Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.*

This is his last farewell. He endeth the epistle with the same words wherewith he began. As if he said: I have taught you Christ purely, I have intreated you, I have chidden you, and I have let pass nothing which I thought profitable for you. I can say no more, but that I heartily pray that our Lord Jesus Christ would bless and increase my labour, and govern you with his holy spirit for ever.

Thus have ye the exposition of Paul's epistle to the Galatians. The Lord Jesus Christ, our justifier and saviour, who gave unto me the grace and power to expound this epistle, and to you likewise to hear it, preserve and stablish both you and me (which I most heartily desire), that we, daily growing more and more in the knowledge of his grace and faith unfeigned, may be found unblameable and without fault in the day of our redemption. To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory world without end. Amen.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen (1 Tim. i. 17).

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